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# **The Tribes and Castes of Cochin**





# The Tribes and Castes of Cochin

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Volume III

*L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer*



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## CHAPTER XII.

## THE TAMIL BRAHMANS.

In the second division of the Dravida Brahmans who have, in former times, immigrated and settled in the Cochin State, are included the Tamil Brahmans. They are also known as Paradesis, or foreign Brahmans, as contrasted with the Nambuthiris who are considered as the Native or original Brahmans. They numbered at the Census of 1901, 16,017; 8,322 being males and 7,695 females.<sup>1</sup> Their first advent to the Cochin State, chiefly from the Chola and Pandiyan Kingdoms, according to an old tradition, dates back to the period subsequent to the fall of the Panniyur temple in South Malabar, and during the centuries following it. In fact, immigration and settlement have been and are still going on in small numbers. They have no permanent vested interests in the State. In all essential points they adhere to the customs of their ancestors, though in minor social matters such as dress (of the males), observances of pollution by touch and approach, etc., they have adopted the ways of the Nambuthiris. Many of them have also adopted Malayalam as their mother tongue, though mutilated Tamil is spoken at home.

All the Tamil Brahmans fall under one of the three main divisions following one of the three *Vedas*, *Rig*, *Yajus*, *Sáman*, and this threefold division is recognized only for ceremonial purposes. All the religious ceremonies are performed according to the *Grihya Sūtras* (ritual books), belonging to their *Vēda* or *Sákha*. Of these, there are eight kinds now in vogue. Thus the Brahmans claim descent from one or more of the Rishis—*Athri*, *Bhrigu*, *Kuthsya*, *Vasishtha*, *Gauthama*, *Kásyapa* and *Angiras*; according some are given the names of the following *Rishis*—*Agasthya*, *Angiras*, *Athri*, *Bhrigu*, *Kásyapa*, *Vasishtha* and *Gauthama*.

Internal  
structure of  
the caste.

1. Cochin Census Report 1901, page 183.



These are said to have eighteen *Ganams*, and for each *Ganam* there are a number of *Gotras* in all numbering about 230.<sup>1</sup>

Each *Rishi* adopted one or other of the three *Védas* or *Sákhás*, and each *Síkha* was again sub-divided into one or more *Grihya Sutrás* or schools. Thus we have for the *Aswaláyana* for the *Rig Véda*, *Bodháyana*, *Bháradvaja*, *Vaighánasa*, *Sathyáshada*, *Apásthamba*, for the *Black Yajur Véda*, *Káthya-yana* for the *White Yajur Véda*, *Dráhyayana* for *Sáma Véda*.

Besides these sub-divisions there are also others which are based on the localities in which they have originally settled in groups. The *Tamil Brahmins* are divided into the following sections:—I. *Smárthas* and II. *Vaishnavás*; and the former are again divided into (1) *Vadaman*, (2) *Brahacharanam*, (3) *Vadhyaman* or *Madhyaman*, (4) *Ashta Sahasram* and (5) *Kánial*. The members of these divisions are found all over the State.

(1) *Vadaman*.—The *Vadamans* claim to be superior to the other classes, but make no objection to dine with all the sections except *Gurukals* in some places. The important sub-divisions among the *Vadamans* are *Váda Désathu Vadamins*, (*Vadamans* from the northern country) and 2. *Chola Désathu Vadamins* (*Vadamans* from the *Chola* kingdom). The former are held by some to be superior to others in status. The members of the two sub-divisions are pure *Smarthas*, who use, as their sect mark, either the *úrdhwa pundram*—straight mark by sandal paste—or the circular mark, but rarely the cross lines. They worship both *Siva* and *Vishnu* with equal reverence, and read the *Puranas* about *Vishnu* and his incarnations. Some *Vadamans* use the *Vaishnavite* names, but follow the *Smártha* customs in every way. There is a proverb—*Vadaman Moothu Vaishnavan* (*Vadaman* ripens into a *Vaishnavan*). The *Sri Vaishnavans* are really *Vadamans* recently converted into *Vaishnavism*.

(2) *Brahacharanam*.—The members of this sect are more *Sivite* and orthodox than the *Vadamans*. They put on *Vibhúthi*—sacred ashes and sandal paste—horizontal lines as their sect mark. The very orthodox among these people wear a single *Rudráksha* bead or necklace of beads, and some make *Sivalingams* out of these beads, which they put on the head during worship. Very seldom are such persons seen in this State. There are nine sub-divisions in this sect, of which the *Mankudi*, and *Sathysmangalam*, are the most important.

(3) *Vādhyaman* or *Madhyaman*.—"The members of this class are said to be more hardworking, generous, and fair the better for their poverty".<sup>1</sup> They are also said to be clanish.

(4) *Ashta Sahasram*.—The members of this division are considered to be inferior to the *Brahacharanams* and *Vadamams*; but in religion they are more Sivites.<sup>2</sup>

(6) *Kanials* or *Kaniyādlars*.—They form a separate class of *Smartha Brahmins*.

There are no Vaishnavites in the State except a few individuals who are officials, and they are therefore omitted in this account.

These divisions were based originally upon territorial groups, and the members of them might be found to belong to the same *Vēda*, *Pravara*, *Sākha* and *Gōtra*, and perform the domestic ceremonies in accordance with one of the *Grihya Sūtras* belonging to each of the *Vēdas*. Thus there is no *Sāstraic* difference in the customs and manners observed by those of one sect and those of another. And yet intermarriage is forbidden though interdining is allowed. The former is, perhaps, owing to the fact of their early settlement in certain localities in separate communities keeping aloof from others.

The Brahmins of all sections are found throughout the State, and live in houses situated in compounds like those of the Nayers and Nambuthiris; but the Brahmins in the Chittur Taluk live in streets like those in the Palghat taluk. These streets are occupied purely by Brahmins, who never allow the Sudras to live in their midst. Only Kammālans are allowed to pass through them, and members of the caste below them are never allowed to enter into them.

*Marriage prohibitions*.—The same marriage prohibitions based on the *Gōtras* and *Pravaras* which are in vogue among the Nambuthiris are prevailing among the Tamil Brahmins also. Each division is endogamous; and though the intermarriage between the members of the various sections is advocated by the enlightened social reformers, yet very few or no such intermarriages have hitherto taken place. A Brahmin's son is allowed to marry his sister's daughter and *vice versa*.

Brahmin girls are married before puberty and in no case is post-puberty marriage allowed. The gift of a maiden (*Kanyika dānam*) to a suitable

**Marriage Customs.**

husband is made between seven and ten years of age, but now this period is exceeded owing to the difficulty of securing suitable husbands for them. The custom formerly was, that when a young man has to be married, his parents used to select a suitable girl after the necessary examination and agreement of horoscopes, but now this custom has quite disappeared. It is the anxiety of the girl's parents to get suitable husbands for them, and horoscopes of boys in their locality or elsewhere are collected and examined by competent astrologers of whom there are many everywhere. In the event of proper agreement between the horoscope of the girl and that of the boy, and of sufficient satisfaction regarding his conduct and the status of his family, the girl's parents engage the service of an intermediary or middle man to talk the matter over with the boy's parents and sound them in regard to the proposed union. Very often days and even months pass before any settlement is made. The old *Vedic* or *Sastraic* ideals for the selection of a bride and a bridegroom are very much overlooked, and the settlement of the proposal very much depends upon the gifts, presents and other prospects which the parents of the bridegroom may expect from the other party. Very often there is a haggling as to the settlement of the bridegroom's price (*Varadekshina*), which varies with the wealth and status of the family and with the University and other qualifications of the boy or the young man. A Brahman graduate can, in these days, without any inheritance, command a very high price, so much as Rs. 2,000 or more, in the matrimonial market, and a matriculate under such circumstances may get between Rs. 750 and Rs. 1,000, while a young man in an intermediate stage may get an amount varying between these limits. Young men of rich and respectable parents get more than three thousand rupees with presents of silver and copper vessels for their future domestic use and gold ornaments for their wearing. When the parents of the bride and bridegroom consent to the proposed match, an auspicious day is selected, when the parents and relations of bridegroom go to the house of the former, and talk over formally the conditions on which the marriage is to take place. A portion of the bridegroom's price is paid in advance by the bride's father at the time. The bride is in some cases given a cloth worth ten or twelve rupees by the bridegroom's father. Those assembled

are formally treated to a chewing of betels, nuts and tobacco ; but now they are treated to a feast. Henceforward the girl is said to be betrothed, and the ceremony is called the betrothal ceremony. The auspicious day on which the marriage is to take place is also fixed by the astrologer at the time.

From that day preparations for the wedding are also made. A *pandal* is made and decorated in front of the house and invitations are sent round to the relatives and friends on both sides by the parents of the contracting couple. The marriage rites now in vogue do not differ from those in *Vedic* times in all essential particulars. The Brahman's of each section follow the *Grihya Sūtras* related in their *Sākha*. The account of the wedding and other ceremonies given in the following pages is in accordance with the *Apāsthamba Sūtras* of Black Yajur Veda.

*Nischikathambula* :—The marriage ceremony begins with *Nischikathāmbula* (exchange of betel leaves as a sign of settlement) for which a cloth (*Pudava*) to the bride-elect, *Pushpam* (flower), sandal, ornaments, cocoanuts and plantains in a copper or brass tray are taken to the bride's house, where the bride is dressed in the new garments and adorned with the ornaments they have brought. The bridegroom's father is seated on a plank in the midst of an assembly of Brahman's, *Vaidiks* and others, when, after a bestowal of blessings, the bride's father proclaims his intention to give his daughter in marriage to the bridegroom, and that he may come for the purpose after the completion of the *Vratams* (expiatory ceremonies). The bridegroom and his party return to their residence, and again go back to the bride's house for the aforesaid ceremony.

*Vratams* :—The Brahman's who have been invited assemble in the bride's house. The bridegroom sits on the marriage dais, and after repeating certain Vedic verses, begins with the permission of the assembled the following *Vratams* :—*Prājāpathyam*, *Soumyam*, *Agnéyam*, and *Vaiswadevam*. The God Ganapathy is first worshipped. *Samidādhānam* (adoration of fire by a *Brahmachūri*) is next performed ; and ceremonies relating to each of these *Vratams* are performed and completed. All these *Vratams* should have been performed during the period of *Brahmacharyam*. It is not now done in time, and so an expiatory ceremony, which is intended to make up for the omission and which consists of some ghee oblations and gifts

of money (a few annas) to the Brahmans, is then performed. Throughout the *Vratam* ceremonies the bridegroom is helped by a spiritual father or *Guru*, who is generally his father and in his absence his brother or some near relation. The *Guru* then sprinkles water over the bridegroom's body, and directs him to perform the *Kandaṛshi Tharpanam* (offering of water, gingelly and rice, as an oblation to Rishis). The various *Vratams* are gone through rapidly, and oblations of ghee are offered to the various *Dévatās* and *Pitris*. Ten small vessels filled with earth, and various seeds are sowed in them and moistened with water. A piece of cotton thread dyed with turmeric is tied round his wrist. A small silver or copper vessel is placed on a leaf to the northeast of the sacred Fire, and is made to represent Varuna, and a piece of new cloth is tied round the vessel. *Samúvarthanam* ceremony (ceremony to close the Brahmacharyam or bachelorship) is next performed. The bridegroom then gets himself shaved, bathes and is neatly dressed as a married man and adorned in his best.

*Kasiyatra* :—Having rewarded the *Guru* for his tuition, the bridegroom goes on a mock pilgrimage to Benares—a tour intended to complete his education. This is a remnant of the *Snáthakarma* rite at which a *Brahmachari* or Vedic student leaves the *Guru's* house at the close of his studies, and performs a ceremony of oblation to become an initiated householder or *Snáthaka*. Carrying with him an umbrella, a fan and a bundle containing some rice, arecanut and cocoanut, he goes eastward, when his would be father-in-law meets him and brings him to the house at which the marriage is to be celebrated. The father offers him his daughter's hand; and as an assurance of his promise, he is given *Támbula* (betel leaves and nut). The bridegroom then returns to his quarters, and is taken in procession to the bride's house in a palanquin or (*Otta-kattil*) single cot. As he alights at the decorated pandal, the bride joins him. Both the bride and bridegroom are taken on the shoulders of their respective maternal uncles, standing face to face in a conspicuous part of the Pandal. Here the bridal pair exchange garlands, after which they sit on a swing and are treated to a little vocal and instrumental music. A few married women go round them three times carrying water, a light, fruits, and betel in a copper or brass tray. The pair are then conducted into the house and are seated in a conspicuous seat

assigned to them. As they enter the house, they are directed to put their right foot first. Betel leaves, nuts, plantain fruits, and cocoanuts are then distributed to those present there.

*Marriage Proper*.—*Vivāham* or marriage proper now begins, and the bridegroom after a Puja to Ganapathy pronounces the *Sankalpa* with the intention of taking a proper girl for wife in order that he may obtain sons in the interests of *Dharma* or duty.

*Varaprasna*.—The bridegroom then sends some of his relatives to the bride's father to request him to give his daughter to the young man (himself) of the said Gotra, to which he answers in the affirmative. At this stage, their *Gótras* are distinctly mentioned, so as to ensure that they are not within the prohibited degrees. The bride's father declares his intention of giving his daughter in marriage to the bridegroom-elect, who says that he accepts her. The bridegroom is then seated on a heap of paddy when the father sits on the right side of the daughter and begins his *Sankalpa* (mental resolve) for *Kanyākadāna* (gift of the maiden) with his wife near him (*Pathnyasaha*).

He then mentions the several objects he has in view in the bestowal of his daughter, and emphasises the attainment of *Bramhaloka* (abode of Bramha, the Creator), to himself, to his ancestors, and descendants to the tenth generation by the gift of the daughter in marriage to the young man. Both the father of the girl and his wife then wash the feet of the bridegroom, adorn him with sandal and flowers and worship him as *Vishnu* himself. The father then sits upon the heap of paddy with his daughter on his lap facing the east, the mother stands facing northwards and the bridegroom also stands facing westwards in front of the father. The father then or, by proxy, his family priest recites three times the genealogies of the bride and bridegroom to the third generation, makes gift of a *Saligramam* with all puja vessels, a cow, a calf, and land along with the daughter to the bridegroom, his wife pouring a little water into the hands of the bride before she is given into the hands of the young man. As he makes a gift of the daughter, the father addresses the bridegroom thus:—"I give unto thee who art a Vishnu this girl rich in gold and fully adorned with the jewels

with the desire of entering *Bramhalóka* and for the salvation of my forefathers". And looking at the assembly, he says, "I give unto this Brahman, who is a vedic student and worthy of a maiden (*Kanyaka*), my daughter for taking part with him in the discharge of religious duties and the procreation of offspring".<sup>1</sup> Then reciting a number of Vedic texts for the expiation of the sin arising from the gift, the bridegroom accepts the girl and returns with her to the seats assigned to them. He performs the *Vivaha Sankalpa* and then the *Nandi Srádha* and *Punyáham*, after which the sacred fire is kindled.

*Varapúja or Madhuparka*.—After the prayer above-mentioned has been recited, the bridegroom sits down on a stool or cushion, which is presented to him. He first recites a text of the *Yajur Veda*, "I step on this for the sake of food and other benefits on this variously splendid foot-stool." The bride's father presents to him a cushion made of twenty leaves of *kusa* grass, holding it up with both hands, and exclaiming "The Cushion! The Cushion! The Cushion!" The bridegroom replies, "I accept the cushion" and taking it, places it on the ground, under his feet, while he recites the following prayer:—"May those plants over which *Sóma* presides, and which are variously dispersed on the earth incessantly, grant me happiness while this cushion is placed under my feet". Another is presented to him which he accepts in the same manner, saying, "May those numerous plants over which *Sóma* presides, and which are salutary a hundred different ways, incessantly grant me happiness while I sit on this cushion." Instead of these prayers, which are peculiar to the Brahmans that use the *Sama Veda*, the following text is commonly recited:—"I obscure my rivals, as the sun does other luminaries; I tread on this, as the type of him who injures me".<sup>2</sup>

The bride's father next offers a vessel of water, thrice exclaiming, "Water for ablutions!" The bridegroom declares his acceptance of it, and looks into the vessel, saying, "Generous water! I view thee, return in the form of fertilizing rain from him, from whom thou dost proceed;" that is, from the Sun, for it is acknowledged, says the commentator, that rain proceeds from vapours raised by the heat of the sun. The bridegroom takes up water in the palms of both hands joined together, and throws it on his left foot, saying, "I wash my left

"foot, and fix prosperity in this realm": he also throws water on his right foot, saying, "I wash my right foot, and introduce prosperity into this realm"; and he then throws water on both feet, saying, "I wash first one and then the other," and lastly both feet, "that the realm may thrive and intrepidity be gained". The following is the text of the *Yajus* which is generally used instead of the preceding prayers:—"Thou dost afford various elegance, I accept thee, who dost so; afford it for the ab-lution of my feet".

An *Arghya* (that is, water, rice, and *Dhurva* grass, in a conch, or in a vessel shaped like one or rather like a boat), is next presented to the bridegroom in a similar manner, and accepted by him with equal formality. He pours the water on his own head, saying, "thou art the splendour of food; through thee may become glorious." This prayer is taken from the *Yajus*, but the followers of that Veda use different texts, accepting the *Arghya* with this prayer, "Ye are waters(*apah*), through you may I obtain all my wishes;" and pouring out the "water with this text, "I dismiss you to the ocean; return to your source, harmless unto me, most excellent water! But my beverage is not poured forth".

A vessel of water is then offered by the bride's father, who thrice exclaims, "Take water to be sipped", the bridegroom accepts it, saying, "Thou art glorious, grant me glory, or else, "conduct me to glory, endue me with splendour, render me dear to all people, make me owner of cattle, and preserve me unhurt in all my limbs". The bride's father fills a vessel with honey, curds, and clarified butter; he covers it with another vessel, and presents it to the bridegroom, exclaiming, three times, "Take the *Madhuparka*". The bridegroom accepts it, places it on the ground, and looks into it, saying, "Thou art glorious, may I become so". He takes the food three times saying, "Thou art the sustenance of the glorious; thou art the nourishment of the splendid, thou art the food of the fortunate, grant me prosperity". He then gently eats until he is satisfied.

Although these texts are taken from the *Yajus*, yet other prayers from the same Veda are used by the sects which follow it. While looking into the vessel, the bridegroom says, "I view thee with the eye of the sun who draws unto himself what he



"contemplates". On accepting the *Madhuparka*, the bridegroom says, "I take thee with the assent of the generous sun, with the arms of both sons of Aswini; with the hands of the cherishing luminary. He mixes it, saying, "may I mix thee O venerable parent and remove whatever might be hurtful in the eating of thee". He takes it three times, saying, "May I eat that sweet, best and nourishing form of honey; and may I thus become excellent, sweet tempered and well nourished by food". After eating until he is satisfied and after sipping water, he touches his mouth and other parts of the body, with his hand, saying, "May there be speech in my mouth breath in my nostrils, sight in my eye-balls, hearing in my ears, strength in my arms, firmness in my thighs; may my limbs and members remain unhurt together with my soul".

These hospitable rites are then concluded by letting loose the cow at the intercession of the guests. A barber who attends for that purpose exclaims, "The cow! The cow!" upon which the guest pronounces this text—"Release the cow from the fetters of *Varuna*." "May she subdue my foe; may she destroy the enemies of both him (the host) and me. Dismiss the cow, that she may eat grass, and drink water". When the cow has been released the guest thus addresses her:—"I have earnestly entreated this prudent person (or according to another interpretation of the text, each docile person), saying, "kill not the innocent, harmless cow, who is mother of Rudra, daughter of Vasus, sister of *Adityas* and the source of ambrosia." In the Yajur Vêda the following prayer is added to this text:—"May she expiate my sins and his (naming the host), release her that she may graze". It is evident that the guests' intercessions imply a practice, now become obsolete, of slaying a cow for the purpose of hospitality."

Being thus affianced, the bride and bridegroom then walk forth, while he thus addresses her:—"May the regents of space, may the air, the sun, the fire, dispel that anxiety which thou feelest in thy mind, and turn thy heart to me".

He proceeds thus, while they look at each other, "Be gentle in thy aspect, and loyal to thy husband, be fortunate in cattle, amiable to thy mind; and beautiful in thy person; be mother of valiant sons, be fond of delights, be cheerful, and bring prosperity to our bipeds and quadrupeds". At

this stage of the ceremony the following prayers are recited :—  
“Soma gave her to the Sun, the Sun gave her to the regent of  
“Fire, Fire gave her to me; with her he has given me wealth  
“and male offspring. May she be a most auspicious cause of  
“prosperity, never desert me, etc.”

Then a circular substance made of twisted grass is placed on the head of the bride, and the bridegroom repeats the following formula—“Blessed by the Surya, sit round the sacred  
“Fire, and look at the dharba ring, my mother-in-law and  
“brother-in-law”. A yoke containing two holes at one end is also placed over it at right angles to it, the other end of the yoke being held in a northerly direction. A gold coin is inserted in one of the holes and sanctified water is sprinkled over her. Then the yoke and the *andwa* are removed from the head, with the recital of the following texts :—“Oh Indra!  
“cleanse and purify this girl just as you did in the case of  
“*Abala* by pouring water through three holes before marrying  
“her. May the gold prove a blessing to you. May the yoke,  
“the hole of the yoke, bring happiness to you. May we be  
“blessed to unite your body with mine. May we become purified with the Sun and may this water give you health and  
“long life.”

She is dressed in a new cloth which she has to wear during next four days of the marriage festivities. The following prayers are recited in this connection :—“May those  
“generous women who spun and wound the thread, and who  
“wove the warp and weft of this cloth, generously clothe thee  
“to old age : long-lived women ! Put on this raiment. Clothe  
“her, invest her with appeal ; prolong her life to old age ;  
“mayst thou live a hundred years”.

*Mangala Dharana* :—The *táli* or *mangalasutra* is tied round the neck of the bride by the husband who, says, “O lovely girl ! I tie this auspicious thread, which I expect to be the source of my long life, round thy neck. Mayst thou live a hundred years”.

A girdle made of *munja* grass twisted is tied round the waist of the bride by the bridegroom, and both return to a conspicuous seat hand in hand and seat themselves on it. He prepares the *hómam* or sacrificial fire and hallows the implements of sacrifice.

The next portion of the wedding ceremony is the *Pānigrahanam* (clasping of hand), for which a few preliminary gifts are made.

The bridegroom takes the bride's right hand, reciting the following prayers:—"I take thy hand for the sake of good fortune, and thou mayst become old with me, thy husband. May the deities, namely, the divine sun (*Aryamān*) and the "prolific Being (*Sāvitrī*) and the God of love, give as a "matron unto me that I may be a householder." The next important ceremonial is the *Sapthapadi* or the bride's taking seven steps. It is the most important of all wedding rites, for the marriage is complete and irrevocable as soon as she has taken the seventh step and not sooner. She is directed to take the seven steps in a northerly direction from the fire. The wife stands facing the east, and the husband standing before her takes hold of her right foot, and makes her take seven steps with the recital of the following:—1. "May Vishnu cause thee to take one step for the sake of obtaining food. 2. May Vishnu cause thee to take two steps for the sake of obtaining strength. 3. Three steps for the sake of solemn acts of religion. 4. Four steps for the sake of obtaining happiness. 5. Five steps for the sake of cattle. 6. Six steps for the sake of increase of wealth. 7. Seven steps for the sake of obtaining priests for the sake of performing sacrifices". (In the Yajur Veda the texts are varied, so that the third step is for the increase of wealth, and the sixth for obtaining happy seasons). The bridegroom then addresses the bride. "Having completed "the seven steps, be my companion". May I become thy "associate. May none interrupt thy association with me. "May such as are disposed to promote our happiness, confirm "thy association with me". The bridegroom then addresses the spectators. "This woman is auspicious, approach and "view her; (and having conferred our good wishes) grant auspicious fortune on her, depart to your respective abodes."

"I am the Saman (Veda), thou art the Rig (Veda), I am "the sky, thou art the earth; come let us marry; let us hold "conjugal intercourse; let us procreate offspring, let us obtain "sons; may they reach old age; may we, being affectionate, "glorious, and well disposed, see during a hundred years, live "a hundred years, and hear a hundred years".

The bridegroom then offers sixteen oblations of ghee to the Vedic deities Agni (fire), Soman, Gandharva, Indra, Varuna, Brihaspathy, etc., for their conjugal happiness. The other portions of the ceremonial are *Asmarohanam* and *Lajahomam*.<sup>1</sup> The ceremony is brought to an end by another Homam named *Jayāti Hōmam*, after which the *munja* girdle is untied, and the married couple are blessed by the priest and the Brahman *Vaidiks* assembled there then.

*Grahapravesanam* :—On the same afternoon, the bride and bridegroom go in procession in a palanquin to the house or temporary residence of the latter, and the married couple seat themselves on a bull's hide with the neck towards the east.<sup>2</sup> After a puja to Ganapathy and *Pathiprayana Japam* i.e., prayers to deities to protect them in their way to the husband's house, he recites the following texts when she ascends the carriage or palanquin:—"O Wife of the Sun! ascend this vehicle resembling the beautiful blossoms of the cotton tree and "butea, tinged with various tints and coloured like gold, well "constructed, furnished with gold wheels, and the source of "ambrosia, (that is, of blessings), bring happiness to thy husband". Proceeding with the bride, he or some other person for him, recites the following texts on their coming to a cross road; "May robbers, who infest the road, remain ignorant (of "the journey); may the married couple reach a place of security "and difficult of access, by easy roads; and may foes keep aloof"

Alighting from the carriage, the bridegroom leads the bride into a house, chanting the hymn called *Vamadēvāya*. Matrons welcome the bride, and make her sit down, on a bull's hide of the same colour and placed in the same manner as before. The bridegroom then recites the following prayer :—"may "kine here produce numerous young; may horses and human "beings do so; and may the deity sit here, by whose favour "sacrifices are accomplished with gifts of a thousandfold." The bridegroom sitting by her side makes oblations to the aforesaid deities for the blessings of prosperity, happiness, and offspring. Then a male child of a woman who had borne many living sons is placed on her lap and given plantain fruits. The bride and bridegroom rise up, and are shown the pole-star and *Arundhathi*, reciting the following texts :—"Heaven is stable;

1. Vide Marriage ceremonies of the Nambuthiris, page 100.

2. They are now seated on a grass mat,

"the earth is stable; this universe is stable; these mountains are stable; may this woman be stable in her husband's family". (Dhruva, the pole-star, also signifies stable, fixed, steady, firm).

*Aupasana* :—The bridegroom then makes for the first time *Agnéya Stālīpakam*, or oblation of rice cooked in the domestic fire itself, in order that the fire may become so holy as to have it performed every morning and evening with oblations of uncooked rice. The first *Aupasana* takes place in that night, for which the couple fast during the day. During the first three nights they sleep on the same cot; though they cannot approach each other. A twig of the pipal tree decorated with flowers, sandal paste, and covered with cloth or thread representing Gandharva is placed between them to prevent their approaching together. After midnight of the fourth day the stick is removed.

The account above given regarding the *Graha-pravesanam* and *Aupasana* is in accordance with the Grihya Sutras, but in practice they are done at the bride's house. After going to the house of the bridegroom, the contracting parties are served with some milk and a few plantain fruits. After the usual blessings, they return in procession to the bride's house. There is nothing of importance on the second and third days except the performance of *Aupasana* by the conjugal pair.

*Seshahómam* :—On the night of the fourth day after 1 P. M., this ceremony is performed, for which six oblations with as many prayers are addressed to fire, air, sun, prajapathy, oceans, rivers, sky and to the twelve months. Four drops of ghee are also left on the bride's head. The prayers to remove anything injurious in the person of the bride might be injurious to her husband, to her offspring, to cattle, to the household, and to honour and glory are then recited. The following text is recited while the water is poured on the bride's head:—"That blameable portion of thy person which would have been injurious to thy husband, thy offspring, thy cattle, thy household, and thy honour, I render destructive of paramours: May thy body, thus cleared from evil, reach old age with me". The bride is then fed with food prepared in a caldron, and the following text is recited:—"I unite thy breath with my breath; thy bones with my bones; thy flesh with my flesh; and thy skin with my skin".

This is followed by the recital of a *Garbhádána Mantram*. After the distribution of betel leaves and arecanut to the Brahmins assembled, the bride and the bridegroom chew betel for the first time, after which they bathe, and neatly dressed they appear before the *Vaidiks* assembled, who bless them.

*Conclusion* : The marriage ceremonies thus far described may be here recapitulated. The bridegroom goes in procession to the house where the bride's father resides, and is there welcomed as a guest. The bride is given to him by her father in the form usual at every solemn donation, and their hands are bound together with grass. He clothes the bride with a garment, and the skirts of her mantle and his are tied together. The bridegroom makes oblations to fire, and the bride drops rice on it as an oblation. The bridegroom solemnly takes her hand in marriage. She treads on a grinding stone. They walk round the fire. The bride takes steps seven times, conducted by the bridegroom, and he then dismisses the spectators, the marriage being now complete and irrevocable. In the evening of the same day the bride sits down on a grass mat and the bridegroom points out to her the Pole star as an emblem of constancy. They then partake of a meal. The bridegroom remains four days at the house of the bride's father, and on the fifth or any auspicious day he conducts her to his own house in solemn procession. She is there welcomed by his kindred, and the solemnity ends with oblations to fire.

The wedding ceremonies thus far described are in accordance with the *Apasthamba Grihya Sutras* of Black Yajur Veda; but the Tamil Brahmins, who follow the *Sama Veda*, perform their domestic ceremonies as prescribed by *Dráhyayana Grihya Sutras*, which, so far as marriage rites are concerned, differ only in some particulars of secondary importance; a few of which are given here.

While the bridegroom is welcomed with formalities (*Vara-puja*) already mentioned or more properly before his arrival, the bride bathes with the recital of the following texts:—"Three vessels of water are severally poured on her head with three different prayers:—" 1. Love! I know thy name. Thou art called an intoxicating beverage. Unite the bridegroom happily. For thee was framed the inebriating draught. Fire! thy best organ is here: Through devotion wert thou created".

"May this oblation be efficacious". "2. Damsel! I anoint this thy generative organ with honey, because it is the-second mouth of the Creator. By that thou subduest all males, thou unsubdued by that, thou art lively, and dost hold dominions. May this oblation be efficacious". 3. "May the primeval ruling sages, who framed the female organ as a fire that consumeth flesh, and thereby framed a procreating juice, grant the prolific power that proceeds from the three horned bull and from the sun. May this oblation be efficacious". To elucidate the first of these texts the commentator cites the following passage:—"The sage Vasishta, the regent of the moon, the ruler of Heaven, the preceptor of the Gods, the great forefather of all beings, however old in the practice of devotion and old by the progress of age was deluded by women. Liquors distilled from sugar, from grain, and from the blossoms of *Bassia*, are three sorts of intoxicating drinks; the fourth is woman, by whom this world is deluded. One who contemplates a beautiful woman becomes intoxicated, and so does he who squaffs an inebriating beverage. Woman is called an inebriating draught, because she intoxicates by her looks". To explain the second text, the same author quotes a passage from the Veda, intimating that Bramha has two mouths, one containing all holiness, and the other allotted for the production of all beings; "for they are created from his mouth".

But the ritual of the *Sāma Vēdi* priests makes the gift of the damsel precede the tying of the knot, and, inconsistently enough, directs the mantles to be tied before the bridegroom has clothed the bride. After the donation has been accepted as above-mentioned, the bride's father should tie a knot in the bridegroom's mantle over the presents given with the bride, while the affianced pair are looking at each other. The cow is then released in the manner before described; a libation of water is made; and the bride's father meditates the *Gayitri*, and ties a knot with the skirts of the bride's and bridegroom's mantles, after saying, "Ye must be inseparably united in matters of duty, wealth, and love".<sup>1</sup> The bridegroom afterwards clothes the bride with the following ceremonies.

According to the followers of *Samaveda*, the bridegroom, immediately after the scarf has been placed on the bride's

1. Asiatic Researches, Vol. II, pages 288-311.

shoulders, conducts her towards the sacrificial fire, saying, "Soma (the regent of the Moon) gave her to the sun, the sun gave her to the regent of fire, fire has given her to me, and with her wealth and male offspring." The bride then goes to the western side of the fire and recites the following prayer while she steps on a mat made of *Virana* grass and covered with silk:—"May our Lord assign me the path by which I may reach the abode of my Lord." She sits down on the edge of the mat and the bridegroom offers six oblations of clarified butter, reciting the following prayers, while the bride touches the shoulder of the bridegroom with her right hand:—1. "May fire come first among the Gods; may it rescue her offspring from the fetters of death; may Varuna (king of waters), grant that this woman should never bemoan a calamity befalling her children. 2. May the domestic perpetual fire guard her; may it render her progeny long-lived; may she never be widowed; may she be mother of surviving children; may she experience the joy of having male offspring. 3. May Heaven protect thy back; may air and the two sons of Aswini protect thy thighs; may the sun protect thy children, while sucking thy breast; and may Brihaspathy protect them until they wear clothes; and afterwards may the assembled Gods protect them. 4. May no lamentation arise at night in thy abode; may crying women enter other houses than thine; mayst thou never admit sorrow to thy breast; mayst thou prosper in thy husband's house; blest with his survival and viewing cheerful children. 5. I lift barrenness, the death of children, sins, and every other evil as I would lift a chaplet off thy head; and I consign the fetters (of premature death) to thy foes. 6. May death depart from me, and immortality come; may Yama, the child of the sun, render me fearless. Death! follow a different path from that by which we proceed, and from that which the Gods travel. To thee who seest and who hearest, I call, saying, hurt not our offspring nor our progenitors. And may this oblation be efficacious." 1. The bridegroom then presents oblations, naming the three worlds separately and conjointly and offers either four or five oblations to the fire and to the moon. The bride and bridegroom then rise up, and the latter passes from the left of the former side to her right, and makes her join her hands in a hollow form.



According to the ritual, which conforms to the Sámaveda, the bridegroom sits down near the fire with the bride, and finishes this part of the ceremony of making oblations, while he names the three worlds separately and conjointly. The taking of the bride's hand in marriage is thus completed. In the evening of the same day, as soon as the star appears, the bride sits down on a bull's hide<sup>1</sup> which must be of a red colour and must be placed with the neck towards the east and the hair upwards. The bridegroom sits down near her, makes oblations while he names the three worlds as usual, and then makes six oblations with the following prayers, each time pouring the remainder of the clarified butter on the bride's head:—1. "I obviate by this full oblation all the ill marks in the lines of thy hands, in thy eye-lashes, and in the spots (on thy body). 2. I obviate by this full oblation all the ill marks in thy hair and whatever is sinful in thy looking, or in thy crying. 3. I obviate by this full oblation all that may be sinful in thy temper, in thy speaking and in thy laughing. 4. I obviate by this full oblation all the ill marks in thy teeth and on the dark intervals between them, in thy hands and in thy feet. 5. I obviate by this full oblation all the ill marks in thy thighs, on thy privy part, on thy haunches, and on the lineaments of thy figure. 6. Whatever natural or accidental evil marks were on all thy limbs, I have obviated all such marks by these full oblations of clarified butter. May this oblation be efficacious".<sup>2</sup>

The following customs are in vogue among the Brahmans who marry for the third time. It is believed that a third marriage is always inauspicious, and the bride will soon become a widow. When an individual marries a third wife, the man is made to marry the *arka* plant (*calotropis gigantea*) to prevent further mishap, and the real marriage becomes the fourth. In an orthodox fashion it is generally celebrated on some Sunday or Monday when the constellation *Hashtam* becomes visible. The bridegroom, accompanied by a priest and another Brahman, repairs to a temple or a spot near the *arka* plant, and decorates it with a cloth and a piece of string and is symbolized into the sun. The bridegroom then invokes it thus, "Oh! Master of three Lókas

1. A grass mat is now substituted for it.

2. Asiatic Researches Vol. II, pages 282-311.

"or worlds, Oh ! the seven horsed, Oh ! Ravi, avert the evils of "the third marriage." Next the plant is addressed in the following words :—" You are the oldest of the plants of this world, "Bramha created you to save such of us as have to marry a "third time, so please become my wife ". The Brahman who accompanies the bridegroom becomes his father-in-law for the time being, and says to him, "I give you in marriage Aditya's "great grand daughter, Ravi's grand daughter, and my daughter *Arkanya*". All the ceremonies such as the preparation of *Hómam*, *Táli*-tying, etc., are performed as, at a regular marriage, and after the recitation of a few Vedic hymns, the plant is cut down. According to some persons the plant is believed to be a willing scape-goat to others' ills. Oil and ghee applied to the head of the victim are sometimes transferred to this plant, when it withers and saves the man, even as Baber is said to have saved his son. "May the *arka* plant grow luxuriant in your house ". It is the commonest form of curse. On the other hand, the plant is held sacred by those who follow the *Yajur* Vêda or *Sama* Vêda: they use the leaves during the *Nandi* ceremony, which is one of the marriage rites. The leaves of the plant are used on the *Rathasapthami* day (the 7th day after the new-moon in the month of Chingam) in propitiation of the sun. In the worship of the *Rishis* and *Pitris* at the *Upâkarma* ceremony the Brahmins who follow the *Sâmaveda* make use of the flowers and leaves of the plant. The juice of this plant is a favourite agent in the hands of the suicides.

The various ceremonies performed for the wedding by the bride and bridegroom during the four days and the recital of the Vedic hymns connected with them are at the dictates of the priest. The real significance of the holy texts and the purpose for which they are intended are entirely lost sight of. In fact, the formalities are gone through without any comprehension of the real purpose of the ceremonies. The worship of *Agni* (fire), begun on the wedding day to be continued throughout their life-time, is terminated on the fifth or sixth day, and renewed before every domestic ceremony and closed thereafter. On the second and third days of the marriage ceremonies *Hómams* are performed in the morning and evening, and the *Nalâgu* ceremony is also performed in the afternoon. In this the couple are seated on planks covered with mats in the midst of a large number of women assembled within the pandal. In

front of them is a tray in which are placed betel leaves, areca-nuts, fruits, flowers and turmeric paste. The women sing songs, and the bride also sings in praise of the bridegroom. Taking a little of the turmeric paste made red by the addition of chunám, she makes marks by drawing lines over his feet (*Nalgu idal*). The ceremony closes with the waving of *Arathi* and the distribution of betel leaves to the women assembled. On the evening of the third day, a procession is got up at the expense of the maternal uncle of the bride, who, mounted on an elephant or seated in a palanquin and accompanied by a long line of men and women, all neatly dressed and well decked out, goes round the street and is made to worship the deity, after which all return to the bride's house, when the bridal pair exchange garlands and are blessed. At night also, after the usual *Aupāsana* ceremony, a girl is dressed up as a boy and another girl well dressed and decked out accompany the bridal pair in a procession got up by the women to go round the street, when some mock play and amusements are indulged in. After their supper, they are seated on a swing, when songs are sung and the guests are entertained with music by professional songsters. There is also a similar procession on the fourth day at night.

*Present condition of Matrimonial Relations among the Brahmans* :—As has been said, the marriage ceremonies last for four days, during which the bridegroom's party, the relations and friends on both sides are sumptuously fed at 11 A. M., and 8 P. M., every day. A fashion has also been set up now-a-days to treat them to a breakfast at 8 A. M., and to a lunch at 4 P. M., with coffee or tea with sweetmeats.

In grand celebrations, the bride's father, in addition to the bridegroom's price (which may be two or three thousand rupees), spends a similar amount, a major portion of which is spent in feeding the bridegroom's party, bride's relations, friends and others who attend the wedding, and the balance, in presents of clothes and ornaments to the bridegroom, and in providing the bride with vessels of silver and copper, according to the demands of the bridegroom's party. Among the bride's parents of moderate means, the expenses may vary from Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 2,000. Among very poor people, the expenditure may amount to Rs. 500. Now-a-days there is a tendency for the diminution of

expenses connected with feeding as the demands in other directions have comparatively increased. While the expenditure on the part of the bride's parents are enormous, the bridegroom's parents try to make considerable profits out of the wedding. A portion of the bridegroom's price is set apart for the ornaments of the bride and for other items in connection with the ceremony, and the balance is reserved as a saving. Very often, when the bride's father is unable to pay the bridegroom's price in ready cash, he pays a portion of it and either undertakes to provide his daughter with ornaments before she joins her husband, after the nuptials, or gives a promissory note for the payment of the balance at a convenient opportunity. It is further incumbent on him to provide the bridegroom with presents of cloth on all auspicious occasions, to spend a few hundreds of rupees in the purchase of vessels and presents of clothes for the nuptials, and a similar or smaller sum for the pregnancy rites. The least cause of dissatisfaction or misunderstanding subjects the poor little girl to every kind of ill-treatment in the house of her father-in-law. Threats to re-marry the bridegroom are also conveyed to the bride's parents, if they will not make amends for any frivolous mistakes of omission or commission on their part. Education, instead of nullifying or moderating these injurious effects, only encourages them. In fact, the University standard has become a powerful engine of oppression at the hands of the girl's father. "A Bachelor of Arts", if he is a bachelor, even though he may be a homeless pauper living upon his friends' bounty, must have a handsome wife, adorned with jewelry and ornaments from head to foot and cash payment of two thousand rupees or more. The bridegrooms thus command a high price in the marriage market, and become the object of vigorous competition. The rich get their daughters married in time to suitable husbands, while the poor are driven to reckless borrowings or, as the last alternative, resort to any means, if they can avoid the disgrace of allowing their daughters to remain unmarried before they come of age.

Unless the rich and other gentlemen of light and leading set an example by following the old Sastric ideals, and put an end to the custom of receiving the bridegroom's price, and societies are also organized in all Brahmanic centres to condemn

it, and thereby to elevate the moral tone of the people in these matters, worse evils may be anticipated, *i. e.*, only girls whom their parents can afford to marry can survive.

In this connection, it will be interesting to note the excellent example which the Rajaput clans have set and which deserves to be followed throughout India. "Themselves among the purest representatives of the Indo-Aryan type, they have revived the best traditions of the Vedic age and have established for themselves the ordinance that no girl shall be married before she is fourteen years old and that the marriage expenses shall in no case exceed a certain proportion of the father's yearly income. That, I venture to think, is the aim which those who would reform society should, for the present, set before themselves. If they succeed in doing for India what Colonel Walter did for Rajaputana, they will achieve more than any Indian reformer has yet accomplished. To bring back the Vedas is no unworthy ideal."

"The Rajaputana movement is so remarkable in itself and contains the germs of such high promise that it calls for fuller notice. Nearly twenty years ago, at the suggestion of Colonel Walter, then agent of the Governor-General in Rajaputana, all the Sardars of the various States of Rajaputana assembled at Ajmer for the purpose of discussing arrangements for regulating the expenses incurred on the occasion of marriages, deaths, etc., among Rajaputs of all ranks except the ruling chiefs. By the unanimous decision of these leaders of Rajaput society, a series of observances were prescribed which, revised from time to time, have now assumed the form of definite rules enforced by the influence of a society known, in grateful commemoration of its founder, as the *Walterkrit Rajputra Hitakārini Sabha*. The chief political officer in Rajaputana is the president of the society, and in every State a committee is appointed, consisting of a Sardar, an official member of the Charan and Rao castes, to make arrangements for carrying out the regulations regarding marriages and deaths and other instructions embodied in the rules."

"Under the head of marriage expenses, if the marriage is that of a Thakur himself or of an eldest son, sister or daughter, the limit of expenditure is fixed on the following scale:—  
When the value of the State is below Rs. 1,000, not more than

two-thirds of the annual income may be spent at the marriage; for values between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 10,000 the proportion is reduced to half; for incomes between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 20,000 to one-third; and for incomes above Rs. 20,000 to one-fourth; In the case of marriages of sons other than the eldest, or of nephews and nieces and brothers of the Thakur who are dependent for support upon him, the expenditure may not exceed one-tenth of that admissible in the cases stated above. The abuses attendant on the extravagant largess which used to be distributed among bards and musicians on the occasion of marriages have been got rid of by limiting this expenditure to a percentage of Rs. 6-12-0 on the annual income of the State, and by further restrictions limiting the claim to such presents to the residents of the territory in which the marriage takes place. Only the father of the bridegroom is liable to make such payments; the father of the bride cannot be charged."<sup>1</sup>

In the case of the bride's parents who are poor a small sum of money is paid by those of the bridegroom to defray the expenses connected with the wedding.

When a Brahman girl comes of age, she is lodged in a room of her house, and the information of the joyful incident is sent round to the relatives and friends of the family. The open space in the front of the house is smeared with cow-dung, and decorated with figures as on all auspicious occasions. A few members (males and females) of the family, with a few coconuts and plantain fruits, go to the family of her husband to formally announce the glad tidings, when they are sumptuously fed and given a present of some money, varying with the status of the family.

The girl is dressed in a red garment, and a red mark of vermilion is put on her forehead. In the room are placed a vessel of rice, a vessel of water, and a lighted lamp; and these are waved round the face of the girl, who stands on a grass mat, beneath which is placed some paddy with a few annas. Her girl friends are allowed to be in company with her during the three days of her seclusion; they are all sumptuously fed with rice dyed yellow with turmeric (*pongol*), ordinary rice with curries and sweetmeats at the expense of the girl's aunt,

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1. People of India by Sir Herbert Risley, pages 188-189.

parents of her husband, and her maternal uncle. Both in the early morning and evening the girls sitting on the verandah sing amorous songs and perform now and then a merry circular dance, clapping hands with appropriate songs.

On the forenoon of the fourth day, the girl and her friends anointing themselves with gingelly oil, go to a neighbouring tank or river, and bathe after cleaning themselves with soap. The girl drinks a little of milk, and eats a few slices of plantain fruits; and she plunges in water, throwing the vessel containing them over head into the water, which is taken by one of the virgins. After bath she is neatly dressed and well decked out. Riding in a palanquin or in a decent carriage with her friends behind, she returns home in procession after worshipping the local deity. There is a grand display of drum-beating and other musical instruments. Before entering the house the grown up women of the family and the neighbourhood, and the girls, gather round and perform a circular dance with appropriate songs. All enter the house, seat the girl on a grass mat, and a few of the elderly women wave round her face the articles already mentioned. The female guests assembled there are then sumptuously entertained. The girl is purified by another bath on the following day; and her friends are rewarded with a few annas each, for having been with her during the days of seclusion.

*Nuptials or Garbhadana* :—This is generally performed on an auspicious day within the first sixteen days after the menses. Very often, if the girl is weak, it is postponed to six months or a year with the consent of or according to the convenience of the parties. Sometimes the delay or default of the payment of a portion of the bridegroom's price may serve as a cause for the postponement. An auspicious day *Muhúrtham*, is selected by an astrologer, and during the forenoon of that day the ceremony of *Rithusānti* is performed. A brass or copper pot is filled with water and covered at the mouth with mango leaves, on which is placed a cocoanut dyed with turmeric, and an image thereon of Vishnu made of gold, silver or turmeric; and the various *Suktams* (Vedic prayers in honour of deities, *Bramha, Vishnu, Rudra, Sri, Bhū,*) are recited by Brahman *Vaidiks* who are invited, at the end of which the water thus consecrated is poured on the head of the wife by the

husband. *Ajya* or ghee oblations are offered to the abovementioned Gods or Goddesses. A dose of *Panchagavya* is also given to the wife and husband for their internal purification. If the girl has attained her puberty on an inauspicious day, certain expiatory ceremonies are then performed and gifts to Brahmans are also made at the time. On the night of the *Rithusanti* are performed the Nuptials. A few gifts to Brahman *Vaidiks* and a distribution of betel leaves and nuts to them and to others are made at the time. The couple neatly dressed and adorned in their best are blessed by the Brahmans assembled; and after a sumptuous supper, they are led to the nuptial chamber tastefully decorated, when certain Vedic texts are recited. After this the men withdraw from the chamber, leaving the couple alone. The bridal pair bathe early in the morning and drink a little of the water sanctified by a few Brahmans to become purified.

The guests are treated to sumptuous meals during that day and on the next morning. The conjugal pair are then invited to the girl's house where the guests assembled are well entertained.

The girl's parents, if of moderate means, spend about two hundred rupees or more for the Nuptials while those who can afford it spend twice or thrice the amount in the purchase of clothes for the married couple, vessels, bell-metal dish for taking food, bell-metal lamps and other articles for the domestic use, of a cot, bed, and other necessities varying with their means.

*Valakáppu* —It is a non-Sāstraic ceremony performed during the fifth month of pregnancy, but is sufficiently binding on account of long usage. The pregnant woman is presented with new and bright china bangles as well as those made of silver and gold. Similar ones are presented to the girls who are invited. Female friends and relations are treated to a feast.

*Pumsavanam* and *Seemantham*:—In all essential particulars these do not differ from those performed by the Nambuthiris. But here also the girl's parents have to provide the bridal pair with decent dress and the bridegroom's parents with sweet-meats of various kinds.

*Child-birth, Delivery rites*:—When the pains of child-birth begin for a woman, she is led to a special room, aided by her



mother and others, as also by a midwife. Soon after delivery the mother is given a mixture of Tippali (long pepper) and dried ginger fried, powdered and mixed with honey. A decoction of the same substances is prepared; and two or three spoonfuls of it are given during the next few days, after which a semi-liquid mass of medicine consisting of most of the drugs; ginger and long pepper is given her both in the morning and evening for forty days. There is now a tendency for the women to place themselves under the treatment of the practitioners and midwives trained in Medical Colleges, when they take the medicines and diets prescribed by them. The woman is subjected to a very sparing diet, boiled rice and pepper water for the first few days, and to a similar simple diet thereafter. The baby is fed on the first two days with a little of castor oil, a little palm sugar dissolved in it being given several times; and for the next few days with a little cow's milk and the same oil. After a week or two the baby feeds on the mother's milk for about two months. The mother bathes on the sixth day if she is not ill. The pollution lasts for ten days, and on the morning of the eleventh day, the room is cleaned and her garments washed; the mother and the baby are bathed, after which some Brahmans who are invited sanctify, with the recital of holy texts, a vessel of water with which the whole house, the mother and the baby are sprinkled. She is now only partially pure, and cannot enter the kitchen, nor can she, along with her husband, take part in the domestic ceremonies. She is subject to a further purification by a bath and sanctified water after forty days. The baby feeds mainly on the mother's milk for a few months and along with it on a simple diet (sago rice powdered and boiled in milk) for a year or two.

All post-natal ceremonies such as *Jāthakarmam*, *Nāmakaranam*, *Annaprāsanam*, *Nishkramanam*, and *Tonsure* do not materially differ from those described according to the *Aswālayana Grihya Sūtras*. These are purificatory rites which are prescribed in all *Grihya Sūtras* and in the Code of Manu, for the purification of a man's whole nature, body, soul and spirit, from the taint transmitted through the womb of an earthly matter. In the generality of cases the first few *Samaskāras* are not performed at the special periods prescribed for each, but are in the cases of males postponed to *Upanayana*, and in the case of females to marriage.

*Prajapathya, Soumya, Agneya and Vaiswadeva Vratas:*

—From a Vedic point of view, these four *Vratas*, expiatory ceremonies, are very important, but are now performed before marriage without comprehending the spirit and full significance of them. They are in fact performed after the completion of Vedic studies and before *Samāvarthanam*. The Vedic student makes oblations of ghee into the fire, and offer libations of water mixed with gingelly seeds and rice, both at the beginning and at the completion of a portion of the Vedic study, to the *Rishi* whose work he has been studying for a year. Similarly, when he has studied the other three portions, *Agnéyam*, *Soumyam* and *Vaiswadevam*, he makes similar oblations to the *Rishis* who are their authors. In ancient times, each *Vratam* lasted for a year; but it is now begun and completed on the forenoon of the auspicious day itself.

*Samāvarthanam*.—In these days it is performed on the day of marriage or the day previous.

A man with one wife is the common rule, though in some cases he may have two. The marriage of a second wife is more often due to the absence of a son by the first wife, her illness or perverse temper, and when there are two wives to a man, very seldom has he any peace of mind on account of their quarrelsome nature. It is the first wife that joins the husband in all ceremonies.

When a woman is found to be going wrong and when it becomes public, she is generally excommunicated by the rest of the community.

Among Brahmins the sons inherit the property of their father. A typical Brahmin family is generally patriarchal, and the father's authority is supreme, and his brothers junior to him and sons are obedient to him. His wife holds a corresponding position among the wives of the junior male members and daughters-in-law i.e., the wives of sons. The property is joint property and the earning members contribute to the general welfare of the joint family. The women rise early in the morning, attend to the domestic works, cleaning the house, vessels used for domestic purposes, etc., and then bathe; and after being neatly dressed, attend to the kitchen or other domestic work, prepare the dinner for the members of the family, dine after the males and children have taken their meals, and clean the cooking vessels. The males attend to their daily routine while the women take

Polygamy.

Adultery and Divorce.

Inheritance, Family and Social Organisation.

some rest after dinner or chat with one another, and again after 4 P. M., they cook the food for supper, and the same routine is repeated. After supper they retire to bed. Thus most of their time is spent in attending to the family cuisine. Being unable to read and write, they do not follow any intellectual pursuits. Such joint families as described above hardly exist in these days. Except in very wealthy families the family property tends to disintegration either by partition, marriage of daughters or the education of sons. In that last case when the sons are able to earn, they shift for themselves and settle separately. The parents who have spent all the available funds for the good of their sons and daughters look to them for support in old age; and sometimes feel themselves disappointed.

The Brahmans in the Chittur Taluk reside in *grāmams* (villages) or *Agrahārams*, which are streets containing a single row or parallel rows of houses, with a temple and a tank attached to them. Their settlement in one group was in former times intended for mutual help. All affairs connected with the temple and the village in general, were managed by the elderly members who met together and deliberated upon them. Their verdict was always final. If any member misbehaved or committed any offence, he was made to appear before the meeting and justify his conduct. If he was found to be guilty, he was fined; and for aggravated cases the matter was placed before His Highness the Raja, whose decisions were always final. For all cases of adultery and the like, the culprits were placed under a ban. These old village organizations are fast disappearing, and nobody ever cares for them. In other places where they do not live together, they are no longer under any such influence.

The religion of the Tamil Brahmans (*Smārthans*) does not materially differ from that of the Nambuthiris, like whom they are unsectarians. In their daily religious observances or *Anhikams* their general routine is more or less the same; but the difference consists in the latter following the rites as prescribed by the *Sruthis* and *Grihya Sutras*, while the former follow the rules laid down by the *Smrithis* also in addition. Like the Nambuthiris, the early morning duties of the orthodox Tamil Brahmans are awakening, necessary washings and ablutions, sipping water or *Achamanam*, cleansing the teeth, bathing, *Tharpanam*, *Sandhya Vandanam* and *Japam*.



KAKKALANS—GRASS MAT-MAKERS—AND THEIR WOMEN IN WORKSHOP.



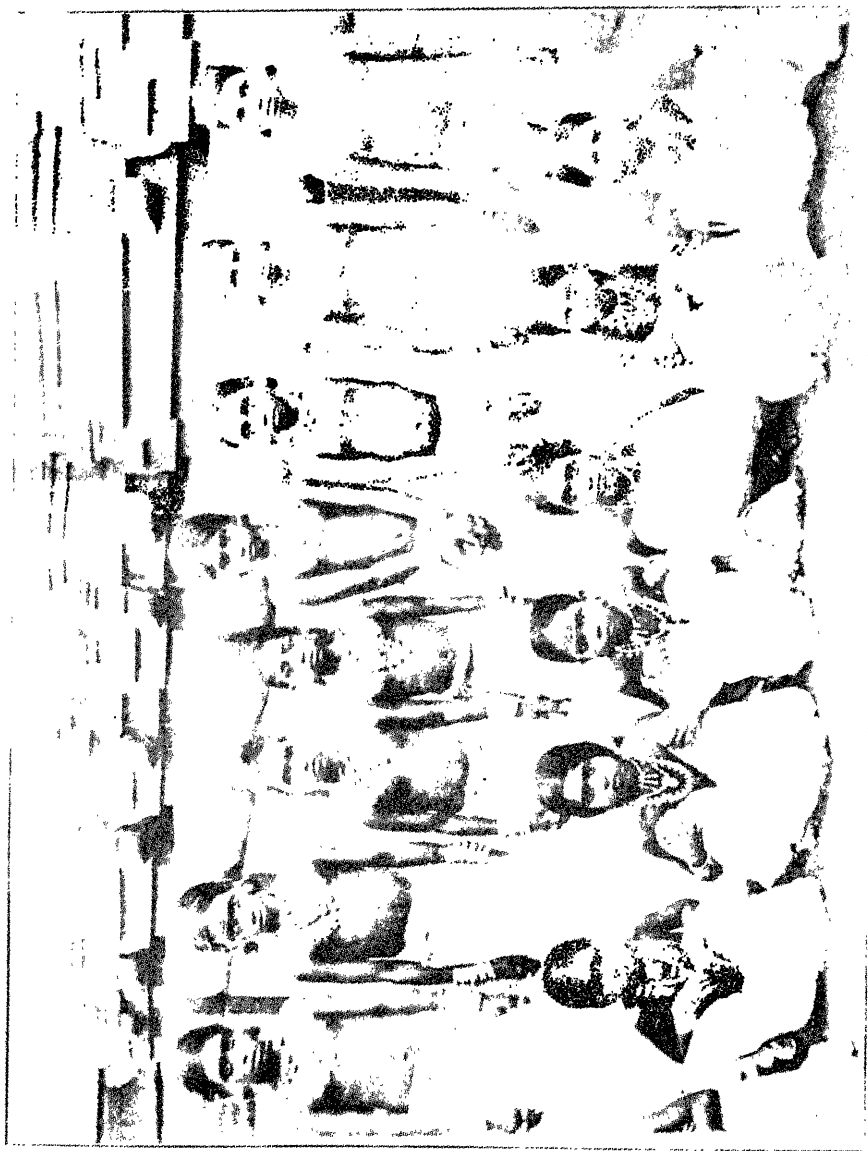
KAVARAS WITH THEIR WICKER-WORK.



A GROUP OF PANDARAMS POLISHING PRECIOUS STONES.



THREE WHITE JEWS.



A GROUP OF NAMBUTHIRI GIRLS WITH ORNAMENTS.

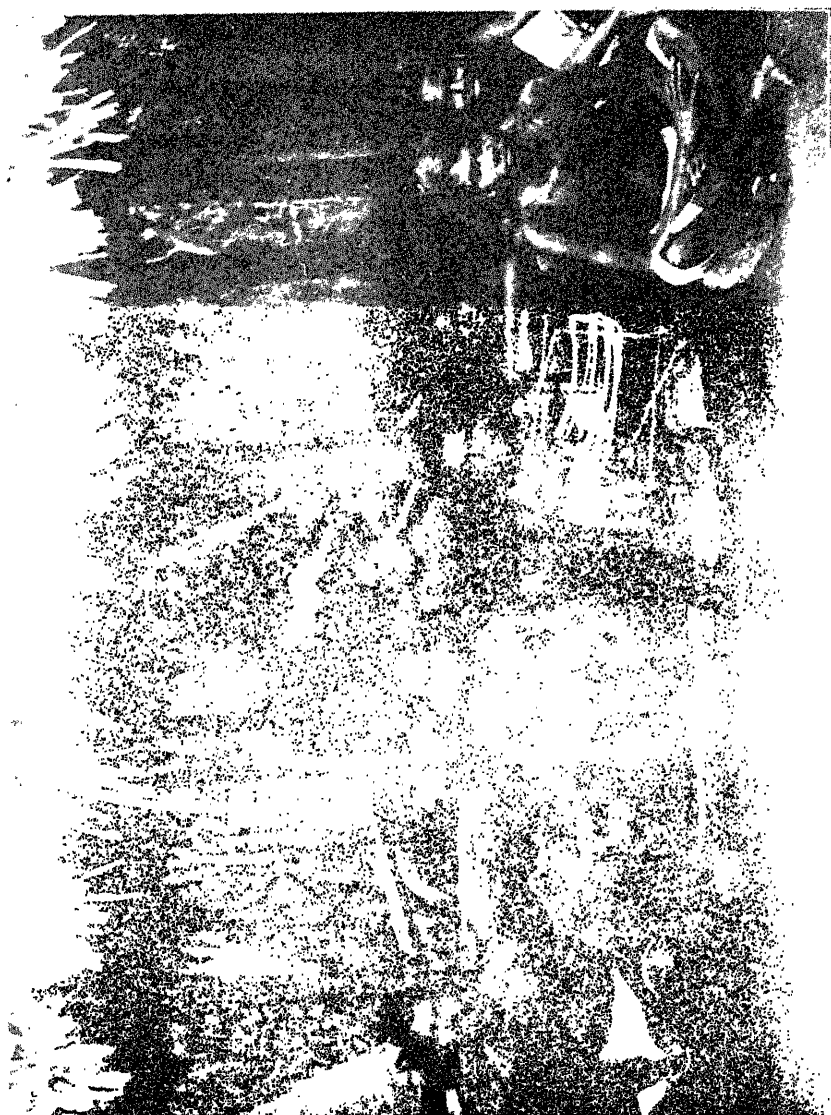




A GROUP OF TAMIL BRAHMAN STUDENTS WITH THEIR PANDITS.



CANARESE DEVANGA MEN AND WOMEN IN THEIR WORKSHOP.



KAUKOLAND IN THEIR WORKSHOP

(meditation). While bathing, the former recite no prayers except those relating to the sprinkling of water, but the latter repeat the following elaborate ones:—"I am about to perform morning ablution in this sacred stream or Ganges, Saraswathy, Yamuna and the Godavari, etc., in the presence of the Gods and Brahmins with a view to the removal of the guilt resulting from act, speech and thought, from what has been touched and untouched, known and unknown, eaten and not eaten, drunk and not drunk".<sup>1</sup> The next important act after wiping the body with a wet cloth, dressing in a silk cloth (*madi*), and putting on the marks on the forehead, chest, hands, characteristic of the sect, is the *Sandhya Vandānam*, which is a kind of thanks-giving service to Gods, when night and dawn meet in the morning and evening. Here again only the differences are noted. The act begins with the sipping of water (*Achamanam*) from the hollow of the right palm, which is done three times with the recital of the following names of Vishnu—*Achyuthayanamah*, *Ananthayanamah*, *Govindayanamah* (salutation be to Achyutha, Anantha and Govinda). Immediately, after the sipping, twelve parts of the body are touched with the fingers of the right hand in the following orders:—

1. The two cheeks with the thumb, repeating the names of Kesava and Narayana.
2. The two eyes with the ring finger repeating Madhava and Govinda.
3. The two sides of the nose with the forefinger repeating Vishnu and Madhusūdana.
4. The two ears with the little finger repeating Trivikrama and Vāmana.
5. The shoulders with the middle finger repeating Sridhara and Rishikēsa.
6. The chest and head with all the fingers repeating Padmanabha and Damodara.

This kind of Achamana is called *Puranachamana* (sipping of water according to Purāna).

After Achamana comes Prāṇāyāma, or holding in of vital breath, which consists in the repetition of the *Gāyatri* hymn and holding the breath by the three distinct operations of *Pūraka*, *Kumbhaka* and *Réchaka*. The suppression of breath is a preliminary *Yōga* practice and enables the performer to fix his mind on the Supreme Being who is meditated on.

1. Religious Thought and Life in India, page 399.

The performer next repeats the *Sankalpa* (determination) with the hands brought together, the right palm over the left and placed on the right thigh. The efficacy of every religious act depends upon *Sankalpa* (strong determination or mental effort). If the mind is not thus concentrated and the act is done mechanically, the result is harmful to the performer. The meaning of the *Sankalpa* for the *Sandhya* service is as follows:—"I am worshipping for the removal of all my sins that have adhered to me and for the purpose of acquiring the favour of Narayana or Supreme Being." Then after the sprinkling of water with certain prayers, he takes up water in his right palm and drinks it repeating the following:—"May the sun and Manyu, the lord of anger, preserve me from the sins of pride and passion. Whatever the nightly sins of thought, word, deed, wrought by mind, my speech, my hands, my feet, wrought through my appetite and sexual organs, may the departing night remove them all. In thy immortal night, Oh Radiant Sun! I offer up myself and this guilt". At the evening service, the name is repeated with the word Agni instead of sun (Surya). At the midday service the following prayers are repeated:—"May the waters purify the earth by pouring down rain: May the earth thus purified by water purify me. May the water purify the teacher of the Vedas. May the Vedas, already pure, purify me; may the water expiate all my sins (such as eating forbidden foods or other sinful actions, if any, and purify me; then the sins of contact. For this purpose I offer myself." Then follows another sprinkling of water for external purification, which, along with the foregoing one, makes him fit to salute the deity in the rising luminary by what is called *Arghya*, which means the act of giving a handful of water on the ground or surface of water. The object of this offering with the recital of *Gáyatri mantra* is this:—From *Sankalpa* onwards the presence of the deity is conceived and invoked, and therefore the offering of water is made in honour of it. The idea is a little anthropomorphic, and shows that it must be a recent introduction. This *Arghya* should always be given facing the Sun.

After this, the performer sits for the *Gáyatri Japa* (the recital of the *Gáyatri* mantrams in an undertone), which is the most important part of the *Sandhya Vandanam* service. He sits in a peculiar posture (*Padmāsana*), reciting the name of

the *Rishi* who composed the *mantra* or the metre and repeats the *Chandas* (the name of the *Rishi* who composed the *mantra* or the metre) of each of the minor *mantras* of the major *mantras*, viz., OM, BHUH, etc. The *Sandhya Devata* is then formally invoked by a set of *mantras*, after which the *Japa* actually begins, when the celebrant considers himself thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the *Devata* whom he tries to identify in his heart. These Gayatri mantrams should be repeated 108 or 28 times.

This is followed by *Pranayama* and *Sankalpa* for *Upasthana*, which is of two kinds (1) *Gayatri-upastana* (2) *Surya-upastana*.

The former is a *mantra* which is intended to send back the *Sandhya Devata* which was previously invoked for purposes of meditation during *Japa*, while the latter *mantra* should be repeated facing the sun during morning and noon, and Varuna during evening respectively. Their translations are given below :—"The adorable glory of the sun God, who sustains all men (by causing rain), is eternal and most worthy of being adored with wonder. The sun, well knowing the inclinations of men, directs them to their various pursuits. The sun upholds both heaven and earth; the sun observes all creatures and their action without ever winking. To this eternal Being we offer oblations mixed with ghee. Oh, Sun! May that man who, through such sacrifice, offers oblations to thee, become endowed with wealth and plenty. He who is under thy protection is not cut off by untimely death; he is not vanquished by anybody, and sin has no hold on this man either from near or from afar". In the evening the following prayer to Varuna is offered :—*Evening Upastanam*—  
"Hear O Varuna! this prayer of mine. Be gracious unto me, this day. I desire for thy protection, and cry to thee. I adore thee with prayer, I beg long life of thee. Therefore, O Varuna! without indifference in this matter take my prayer into kind consideration and do not cut off my life. Oh, Lord Varuna! Whatever offence we as men have committed against divine beings, whatever work of thine we have neglected through ignorance, do not destroy us all, O Lord, for all such sins. Whatever sins are attributed to us by our enemies as by gamblers at dice, whatever sins we may have committed and whatever we may have done through ignorance, do not destroy us, O! Lord, for all such sins. Then O! Lord, we shall become beloved of thee".

*Midday Upastānam*.—"The sun who is the cause of all actions comes on surrounding by the light of truth and a halo of resplendent beauty, vivifying all the human and divine existence and riding on a very pleasant chariot and looking down on the worlds. We contemplate on that Surya. Besides, looking on the divine light which is ever active in expelling darkness, we obtain the god among the Gods who is of the form of light. The rays bear the *Surya* (sun) by whose help everything in the world is known. The halo of rays of various colours equally in splendour, *Varuna* or *Mithras* or *Agni* or the eyes shine for the benefit of the world. The sun who is of the nature of *Atman*, fills in with his rays, the animal and non-sentient kingdoms, the heaven and the earth and the space between them. I devote myself to him for the fulfilment of my desire. We see for a hundred years the sun's orb which is beneficial to the Gods, which bestows every good, which is well-known, which is brilliant and clear on rising. By looking at it we live for a hundred years; we enjoy happiness, with sons and others for a hundred years; for a hundred years we remain in a place; for a hundred years we hear pleasant words; for a hundred years we speak good words, and for a hundred years we are unconquerable. We see the brilliant sun. May he who rises from the great ocean, who shines in the midst of the waters, whose rays are of the colour of the blood purify us. May the Great knower and the giver of all things purify us".

After this is the final prostration of the *Sandhya Dēvata*; and this is followed by the recital of *Gōtra*, *Sūtra*, and the names of the person. The place where the *Japa* is performed is then sprinkled with water consecrated by the repetition of 'OM'.

This in brief is the *Sandhya* service of the Tamil Brahmins, and varies, as among the Nambuthiris, according to the Veda of the performer.

*Pranavam*.—This is the root of the Vedas and Mantras. Every Mantra is its manifestation more or less. It is said to be the root or the mother of the three Vedas, and every Vedic mantra should begin and end with it. It is made up of the three letters A. U. M. As to the real significance of these letters there are two interpretations—Vedic and Agamic.

According to the former, the Vedas invariably point out to OM as a symbol of *Parabrahmam* which is the cosmos. A represents the first manifestation, namely, *Vaisvānara* or Virāt

the waking condition of the deity or *Taijas*. *U* signifies *Hiranyagarbha*, the deity of the *Swapna Avasta* (dreamy state). *M* signifies *Pragna* or the *Sushupti Avasta* the condition of the *Logos* or *Iswara*). According to the latter *A* signifies *Parabrahma*, *U* means only, and *M* the Jiva or the individual ego<sup>1</sup>."

After the morning Sandhya service *Bramha Yagna* or worship of the Supreme Being as prescribed in the Grihya Sûtras is gone through. The first hymn of the Rig Vêda is recited in detail, and then follow the first words of the *Yajur Vêda*, *Sâma Vêda*, *Atharvana Vêda* and *Niruktha*. This is followed by the *Tarpana* ceremony. These ceremonies above described should be performed by all Brahmins alike; but the daily *Devatârchana* or *Dêvata Puja* is performed generally by one of the members of the family. The Gods worshipped are Siva and Vishnu and their consorts Parvati and Lakshmi. Homage is paid to *Saligramam* stones or stone *lingams*. In every Brahmin house a special room or a corner is set apart for the worship of the Gods.

*Panchâyatna Pûja*—*Smârthâs* worship five stones, namely, 1. *Sâligramam* representing Vishnu, 2. *Bâna lingam* (a white stone) representing the essence of Siva, 3. a red stone (jasper) representing Ganapathy, 4. a bit of metallic ore or a *Lingam* representing Pârvathi and Siva, and 5. a piece of pebble or crystal representing the Sun. The worship is begun by invoking the aid of Ganapathy or Vigneswara. Then a vessel filled with water, is placed before the stone, and the following prayer recited by the worshipper.—“In the mouth of the vessel of water live Vishnu, in the lower part Bramha, while the whole company of the mothers are congregated in its middle part”. He also invokes the Ganges, Yamuna or Jamuna, Godavery, Saraswathi and Narmada to be present in this water. A little of this water is poured into a conch-shell and adored with the recital of the following prayer:—“Oh Conch-shell! thou wert produced in the sea and art held by Vishnu in his hand. Thou art worshipped by all the Gods. Accept this homage.” After performing similar *Pujas* to *Atma* (soul) and to the seats (*pidham*), of the deities, the bell is worshipped by the following prayers:—“Oh, Bell! make the sound for the approach of the Gods and departure of the demons. Homage to the bell.” The worshipper claps hands and rings the bell. All *tulasi* leaves, flowers,

1. Esoteric Hinduism page 99.



and sandal paste used for worship on the previous days are removed. The sixteen acts of homage (Shódasópachárana) are next performed in due order, namely,

1. Aváhanam (Invocation of the Gods).
2. Asanam (seat).
3. Pádyam (water for washing the feet).
4. Arghyam (oblation of rice and water).
5. Achamanam (water for sipping).
6. Snánam (bath).
7. Vastram (clothing of Tulasi leaves).
8. Upavastram (upper clothing).
9. Gandham (sandal paste).
10. Pushpam (flowers).
11. Dhúpam (incense).
12. Dhípam (light).
13. Naivedyam (offering of food).
14. Pradakshinam (circumambulation).
15. Mantra pushpam (throwing of flowers).
16. Namaskáram (salutation by prostration).

The five stones are bathed or washed with the recital of the Purusha Suktha hymns, and then wiped with a piece of cloth. The last nine hospitable rites are then performed, and the Déva puja is thus brought to a close. The other important ceremonies are the noon *Sandhya* and the *Vaiswadeva* ceremonies, after which the male members of the family take their meals. The orthodox Brahman takes some rest and then reads Puránas—Rámayanam and Báratam. He performs the evening Sandhya service, and makes some *Japams* or recites the names of Siva or Vishnu. He then goes to his supper at 8 P. M., and after an hour or two retires to bed.

These then are the daily religious observances of the Tamil Brahmans with slight variations in different directions and even among families. The Sandhya service is in fact of two types, Vaidika and Tantrika, and as now performed, does not represent the oldest form in accordance with *Taittiriya Brahmana* and the early *Smrithis*. The *Arghyapradana* (offering of water to the sun and the meditation on the recitation of Gayatri) are the old and essential parts of the ceremony; and to them alone the Nanibuthiris, as distinguished from the other classes of Brahmans, conform even now. The latter have received additions from Puránas and other sources.

The worship of the deities in temples by the Tamil Brahmins does not, in any way, differ from that of the Nambuthiris.

The daily observances described above are practised by very few orthodox Brahmins, while a very large majority are absolutely ignorant of them. The modern conditions of life, the struggle for existence which necessitates them to enter into various occupations for their livelihood and the system of modern education, which Brahmin children and young men receive in school and Colleges, prevent them from obtaining any knowledge of religious observances in their early days. The Sandhya service which every Brahmin has to perform is either forgotten or wilfully neglected by many, and their worship of the deities in temples is also a matter of indifference. The special holy days in honour of the worship of certain deities become days of festivities in which the people indulge in eating. There is thus a tendency for the young men of these days to be somewhat irreligious; and a real awakening in this direction is very necessary.

The Tamil Brahmins take part in the worship of Siva, Vishnu, their consorts, and their manifestations in the temples of the State. They very much frequent these sacred edifices dedicated to Gods and Goddesses; and their adoration does not materially differ from that of the Nambuthiris already described.

Brahmins generally have a long list of holidays, and festivals qualified by fasts (*Upavāsams* and *Vritams*), intended not as a 'penitential exercise', but as a means for the accumulation of merit. Even old age, infirmity and sickness are not exempted from their non-observance. In most cases, they have to perform special *pūjas* and ceremonies, after which alone meals can be taken and that at a late hour. The following is a list of the fasts, feasts and festivals in vogue among the Tamil Brahmins.

*Ekdasi*.—Every orthodox Brahmin fasts on the eleventh day after full-moon or new-moon, and on this day he gives himself up wholly to religious observances such as the recital of mantras and perusal of holy texts. He keeps awake at night, and on the next morning *Dwadesi* (twelfth day) he performs a *pūja* and feeds at least one Brahmin before breakfast.

Temple, Worship, Fasts,  
Feasts and Festivals.

New-moon or *Amāvāsya* :—This is a very important day of religious ceremony, and every Brahman performs *tharpana* or libation of water and *tilam* (gingelly) for the manes of the departed ancestors. He takes only a single meal that day.

*Mahālaya Amāvāsya* :—The new-moon day in the month of Bhādrapāda is held specially sacred.

*Makara Sankranthi* :—It is held sacred because of the Sun's northern course (Uttarāyana) in the Heavens. On the same day, a festival called *pongal* takes place, when cattle are decorated with garlands, and their horns coloured, and mango leaves hung round their necks. The festival is intended for the glorification of agriculture.

*Thye Pūyam* :—This festival which falls on the asterism of Pooyam in Makaram (January-February) is sacred to Subrahmanya, and special offerings are made in all Sivite temples and in those dedicated to Subrahmanya.

*Eclipses* :—The Solar and Lunar eclipses are considered by the Brahmans to be very sacred. At the beginning of an eclipse every Brahman bathes, and those who have no parents, perform *tharpana* (libations of water with gingelly seeds), after which they spend some time in the recital of Gāyatri and other mantrams, for they are believed to be very effective, if recited during that period. A kind of pollution is observed during the period of an eclipse, and a bath at the end is necessary to be free from it. If the Sun or Moon sets before the close of it, there is fasting for the whole night or day, and the fast is broken only after they are seen next free from it. Pregnant women shut themselves in a closed room, for their presence outside is believed to cause some deformity or death to the child in the womb. No puja is performed in a temple to any deity during this unholy period.

*Maha Sivaratri* :—"Great Siva's night". This takes place on the 14th day of the dark half of *Magha* about the middle or end of February. A fast is observed during the day, and a vigil kept during night, when Siva is worshipped.

*Sri Rama Navami* The Birthday of Ramachandra :—This is observed on the 9th of the light half of *Medom* (March-April).

*Gokulashtami* or (*Sri Jayanti*) :—This falls on the eighth day after the full-moon in the month of *Sravana*, the day on which Sri Krishna was born. The devotee fasts during the

day, and after the performance of pūja and perusal of *Bhagavata Purana*, partakes of a light refreshment after midnight.

*Vinayaka Chathurthi*.—This occurs in the month of Bhadrapāda and is in honour of Vignēsvara, the remover of all obstacles. A clay image of the deity and one of a mouse are made, duly consecrated and worshipped in every house.

*Sravanam* or *Upakarmam*.—This generally falls in the month of Srāvana for the followers of Rig and Yajur Vēdas; but the followers of Sāma Vēda perform it on the asterism of Hastha in the month of Bhadrāpāda. On this auspicious day the Brahman removes his sacred thread (*punīl*). The Brahmancharis get themselves shaved in the morning, and all the Brahmins young and old assemble in the village temple by the side of a tank or river, where after a purificatory bath and worship of the *Saptarishis*, the sacred thread is removed. This is followed by a *tharpana* (libation of water to the Rishis and *pitris* or departed ancestors.) The ceremony is brought to a close by presents to the priest and a grand feast in the family.

*Navaratri*.—This is a nine days' festival held in the month of Kanni, beginning from the day next after Mahalaya Amavasya. In every house a special room is decorated, and in it are placed all kinds of toys and fancy articles; and in the evening the women of the household assemble in the room, when songs are sung in praise of the Goddess Saraswathi. On the 9th day *Puja* and *Naivedyam* are offered to religious manuscripts and books, which are collected and kept together in a conspicuous place, and the Goddess of learning who represents them is then worshipped. The Brahman women of the village or of the neighbourhood are invited to the house of one another in the evening. On the last day, that is, the tenth day, *Vijaya Desami*, the children are for the first time initiated into the study of the alphabet. The artisan classes offer puja to the tools and implements used by them in the exercise of their professions.

*Dipavali*.—This is an important festival, which falls on the 14th day of the dark fort-night in the month of Thulam, the day on which Sri Krishna destroyed the cruel demon Narakāsura who ruled the earth and oppressed the people. The chief observance of the festival is an oil bath early in the morning, and men, women and children dress themselves in new garments and take light refreshments. The children delight in the letting of crackers off of various designs.

*Kārthikai* :—This falls in the month of Vrischikam (November-December), and one important feature of this festival is the grand display of lights in every house.

*Ardradersanam* or Thiruvāthirā festival—This is held in Dhanu (December-January) and is sacred to Siva. It is a ten days' festival ending with the asterism of Ardra in all important temples of the East Coast.

Besides the feasts, fasts, and festivals described above there are certain *Vratams* (vows) for which certain ceremonies are performed, either by the women alone or by the women along with their husbands, as directed by the Brahman priests.

The most important of them are given below :—

*Somavara Vratam* :—This is observed by the women every Monday. They fast during the day, and after their bath in the evening adore Siva with offerings. They then take their supper. This Vratam, which is observed to enjoy a happy conjugal life is brought to an end with a grand celebration at the end of two years and four months.

*Pradōsha Vratam* :—This is observed on every thirteenth day after full or new-moon by the wife and husband conjointly with a hope of being free from poverty. They bathe early in the morning, adore Siva, and fast during the day; and after their bath in the evening perform pujas to Siva and his consort with the offerings of flowers and *Naivedyams* (cocoanuts, plantain fruits). They then take their supper. This Vratam is brought to a close with a grand celebration at the end of a year.

*Varalakshmi Vratam* :—This comes about in the month of Srāvana. It is observed by women who have their husbands living, and its performance is believed to ensure a happy conjugal life. The women bathe early in the morning, and cleaning a copper or brass vessel, coats it with chunam, draws a figure of Lakshmi on it, and decks it with jewels. A *tali* is tied round the neck of the vessel, and cocoanut coloured yellow with powdered turmeric is placed over it on a bunch of mango leaves covering its mouth. Puja is then performed, and offerings of sweet meats, cakes and fruits made. The woman then invokes the blessings of the Goddess for the long life and prosperity of her husband.

*Rishi Panchami Vratam* :—The following purānic story is mentioned in this connection. The divine King Indra killed

*Vrithrāsura*, a giant, and thereby committed the sin of man-slaughter. To be free from the sin, he distributed it among the earth, water, trees and women. The monthly course of the women is ascribed to this sin; and to purify themselves from this, the women observe this *Vratam* on the fifth day after New-moon in the month of *Srāvana*.

When a Brahman is about to die, gifts of twenty-eight things are made to Brahman *Vaidiks*. Divine names such as those of Rama and Krishna are recited, and a few chapters of *Bhagavat Gita* are also read by a priest. The body of the dying man is smeared with holy ashes (*Bhasmam*), and a necklace of tulasi beads or *Rudrāksham* is put round his neck. After his death the corpse is laid on a cushion made of grass placed on the floor with the head towards the south. Vedic prayers (*Karnamantram*) are whispered into the ears of the dying man, and the gift of a cow is also made at the time in order that the spirit may easily pass out of the dead body. His wife, sons and daughters go out of the house to prostrate towards the south, which is believed to be presided over by Yama, and then return inside. The chief mourner and his brothers bathe and return home, with a vessel of water, while one of his daughters, sister, or a daughter-in-law brings a vessel of water after their bath and wash the corpse. It is neatly dressed and caste marks are put on the forehead, chest and hands; and tulasi leaves are thrown over and around it by the son. As a Brahman is supposed to have his *Aupasanagni* (fire) by his side, that fire is lighted. If the death happens during night, any day after the full-moon and before the new-moon a day in *Dakshinayanam* or during any five days after the asterism *Avittam* some expiatory ceremonies are performed. If the dead man is one that has not bathed in the Ganges during his life time, a few Brahmins are engaged, and they bathe and sprinkle water on the corpse in the belief that by so doing, he is bathed in the holy water. Some members, especially *Sapindas* of the deceased's, family carry the corpse, covered with a winding sheet, on a bamboo bier to the cremation ground, making offerings to the minor deities on the way. The women of the family burst into lamentations, and when the corpse has reached the cremation ground, the chief mourner sprinkles some water thereon, and throws a quarter of an anna

on it as an equivalent of the purchase of the ground for cremation. The sacred fire is lighted, and the right palm of the corpse is rubbed with a gold coin. Ghee is dropped into its nine openings, and rice thrown over it and put into its mouth. The son takes a burning brand from the sacred fire, and leaves it on the chest, looking at the sun; he then carries a pot of water with a hole at the bottom, through which water trickles out over his shoulders, three times round the pyre and at the third round dashes it. Then all his relations squat on the ground facing the east, and taking up some *Kusa* grass and cutting it into small fragments scatter them in the air, after the recital of some holy texts.

Once more they sprinkle themselves with water and go to a tank for a bath. The Brahmans assembled to attend the funeral are given some *Dakshina* (gifts). The chief mourner and his brothers, if any, get themselves shaved, bathe, and after their return home perform two ceremonies, *Nagna Srádha* and *Pāshāna Stāpanam* (placing the stone). The disembodied spirit is believed to be naked after the burning of the dead body, and therefore to provide it with a body, offerings of water, rice, a piece of cloth, a lamp and a few annas are given to a Brahman. Two stones, one on the bank of a river, and the other at home, are set up to represent the spirit of the departed. For ten days the chief mourner and his brothers, if any, bathe early morning perform the *Sandhya* service, and make libations of water (*Vāsodakam*) by dipping in water a piece of cloth from the winding sheet and rinsing it over the stone placed on the riverside. A libation of water mixed with gingelly seeds (*Thilōdakam*) is also made to it. These offerings are likewise given to the stone set up in the house, along with the balls of cooked rice, which are afterwards thrown in water. A kind of *Vridhi Srādham* is also performed, and this consists of an offering of a measure of rice, vegetables and a few annas to three Brahmans on the first day, four on the second day, five on the third and thus increased up to the tenth day. A similar *Srādha* known as *Nava Srádha* is also performed on the odd days with similar offerings. The collection of bones, called *Sanchayanam*, takes place either on the second, fourth, or the sixth day, and the bones are collected in an earthen vessel, buried underground or thrown into the water. A figure of the dead man is made of the ashes, and on its mouth is placed a vessel

of water with a hole made on the side, and also a ball of cooked rice. On the tenth day the agnates get shaved, bathe and make libations of water to the departed spirit. The mourners also make the offering as usual. The latter along with the agnates return home, and offer libations of water and balls of cooked rice, after which a large quantity of cooked rice, bread, etc., (*Prabhūtha bali*), is offered to the spirit of the departed, which is believed to be very hungry then. The food is heaped up in a very large plantain leaf, and all near relations go round it, weeping and beating their breasts. This is mostly done by the women, while the men stand aloof. The agnates, taking the stones set up, start in procession with the mourners to the tank or river, and throw the offerings and stones into the water. The widow of the deceased is also conducted to the riverside, and after her bath, she is presented with new garments by the son, brother and relations. The sons get shaved. The agnates and the chief mourner all bathe, and the latter perform a *Hónam* (*Anānda hónam*) in the presence of the former. By this ceremony and by taking a dose of sanctified water they become pure, and then return home, taking a little of this fire. On the eleventh day the members of the family bathe, and the sons or the chief mourners perform their usual *Sandhya* service, invite a few Brahmans to prepare the sanctified water with which the whole house, well, cowshed, vessels, etc., are sprinkled to become purified. All the members drink a little of it and become purified. A bull calf, branded on one side of it, is let loose, so as to set the spirit of the departed free from the *Prétha* stage. On the eleventh day, a *Srādha* called *Ekoddishtam* is performed in the fire itself, and then a Brahman who is seated to represent the *Prétha* of the dead person is fed after going through the *Srādha* rites. The balls of cooked rice offered at the time are thrown into the water, and the members of the family again bathe and drink a little of the sanctified water.

No *Avāhana* (invocation) takes place in this ceremony, nor the oblation of cooked rice into the fire, nor do *Vaisawdevas* take part in it.<sup>1</sup> *Ekoddishtha Srādhās* are completed by the performance of *Sapindakaranam*, the reception of the *Prétha* into the community of *Pitris*. If these ceremonies should be properly performed, the subtle parts of the offerings made during their performance feed the deceased till he goes

1. Sankhayana Grihya Sūtras, IV, 2-3.



to *Pitri-loka* (world of the manes). The mantras facilitate his passage thereto, and he takes a place among the *Pitris*. The *Sapindikarānam*, takes place on the twelfth day, but should, according to the *Sāstras*, be performed only a year after death, i. e., on the completion of all the *Masikas* or monthly *Srāddhas*. Now a ceremony called *Shōḍasam* (the sixteen) is performed just before it on the twelfth day, and this consists in giving presents of money and vessels to the Brahmans. On the thirteenth day, the house is purified with sanctified water when twelve Brahman *Vaidiks* are invited to perform *Graha Yajnam* (propitiation of the nine planets). After this worship a feast is given to the relatives and friends. During the night of the same day, some verses called *Charama Sloka* in honour of the dead man are composed and read by a Sanskrit Pandit. Every month for a year after death in a family, *Srādha* is performed as described in the following pages. Those who can afford it, go to Benares and Gaya, where they perform a similar ceremony, which renders the performance of the rites not obligatory thereafter.

*Srādha Ceremonies* :—*Srādha* means an oblation of grain, water or other substances, offered with faith. The performance of the *Srādha* by a son is necessary to deliver a father from the Hell called *Put'*, whence 'the son' is called *Put-tra* the rescuer from "*Put*". Hence it is that every Brahman, in fact, every Hindu desires to have a son and not a daughter. *Srādha* is held to be auspicious, and it is performed for the benefit of a dead person who has received an intermediate body and became a *Pitri* or beatified father. Both in the funeral and *Srādha* ceremonies offerings of the balls of rice and libations of water have to be made with the recital of the Védic texts and prayers. In the former the above mentioned offerings are for the nourishment of the ghost and the formation of the body as a vehicle, whereas in the latter they are offered as an act of homage to the spirit with the body so formed. It is also plainly said in Manu II, 1-137, and elsewhere that the embodied *Pitris* require periodical offerings of *Pinda* and water for their continual nourishment and refreshment. *Srādha* is not always connected with funerals. According to the Vishnu Purana (III-13) a *Grihastha* or householder should worship the manes at the marriage of a son or daughter, on entering a

new building, on naming a child and on other similar auspicious occasions. Nirnaya Sindhu makes mention of twelve different kinds of *Srādhas*, of which *Nithya* (daily or constant), *Naimittika* ('special', performed on special occasions), *Vridhi* (for the increase of prosperity), *Sapindana* and *Parvaṇa Srādhas* are the most important. A short account of each of them is given below.

1. *Nithya Śrādha* is one which consists in giving food to a Brahman, after offering it to three ancestors by name, with the usual preparatory vows and prayers, and with the formality of placing three blades of grass as a seat for each ancestor, but using a single prayer only for the invocation of the manes and omitting the ceremony of welcoming them with an *arghya*. It is a short method of performing the ceremony.

2. *Naimittika Śrādha* is that which is performed on special occasions as at funerals, and refers to one person (*Eko-ddishtam*) recently dead. Only one man is feasted at the end of the rite. *Srādhas* performed in holy places during eclipse, on the first day of Karkadakam, Thulam, Makaram, and Medam, and *Mahalaya Śrādhas* come under this division.

3. *Vridhi Śrādha*:—The obsequies for the increase of prosperity, as the term *Vridhi Śrādha* signifies, are celebrated previous to the solemnization of a marriage, or of any of the ceremonies which, according to the notions of the Hindus, contribute to the regeneration of a twice-born man, that is, of Brāhmana, Kshatriya or Vaisya. This *Srādha* is likewise performed at the commencement and close of a solemn fast.

4. *Sapindana Śrādha*:—This is performed for the benefit of the deceased to enable him to join his ancestors or *Sapindas*, who are connected by the offering of the *Pindas*.

A cow is then usually presented to a Brahman, and this gift is believed to render the crossing of the river *Vaitarani*—river of death—easy for the departed soul. The gift of a boat, cow, and the beddings, and twenty-eight other articles is also made to the Brahman at the time. The *arghya* water of the *Prētha* is combined with that of the *Pitris*, and an elongated mass of cooked rice is placed between the two rows and divided with blades of grass in three portions which are arranged close to the balls of rice. This is regarded as

uniting the dead man with his ancestors. Gifts of a few annas are made to each of the Brahmins assembled there then. The two Brahmins representing the *Vaiswadevas* and *Pitris* are given betel leaves and a few rupees each, and the members of the family go round and prostrate before them, when after bestowing their blessings on them they depart. The rice ball offerings are thrown into the water. After these the house is swept and cleaned, and all the members of the family again bathe and drink a little of the sanctified water to become purified. They wear the holy thread as on the previous day. At the last obsequies for one recently deceased, which is named the *Sapindana*, the following prayer is recited when the riceball which has been offered to him is piled up with the rest; "May the mansion of those progenitors, who have reached a common abode and who have accordant minds, foster him; may the blessed sacrifices sacred to the Gods be his." The subjoined prayer is likewise peculiar to the *Sapindana*. "By (the intercession of) those souls who are mine by affinity, who are animated, (shades) who have reached a common abode, who have accordant minds, may prosperity be mine in this world for a hundred years".

After smearing the place with cowdung a square altar of sand is raised on it, one or two fingers high, and nearly a span in length and breadth. It must be triangular at the obsequies of one recently dead. The person who performs the ceremony first washes his hands and feet, sips water and puts a ring of kusa grass on the ring finger of the right hand. He sits down on the cushion of kusa grass, or of other materials placed upon a blade of such grass. He lights a lamp, reciting a prayer which will be cited further on. He places the implements and materials in regular order and sprinkles water on himself and all around, meditating on Vishnu, sur-named the Lotus-eyed, and revolving in his mind the couplet. "Whether pure or defiled, etc." He now shifts the sacerdotal thread to his right shoulder and solemnly declares his intention of performing a *Sraddha*, and the motive of it. He thrice meditates *Gayatri*, and pronounces the salutation to superior beings, "Salutation to the Gods, to the manes of ancestors".

*Sraddha Ceremony.*



ROMO-SYRIAN MONKS.



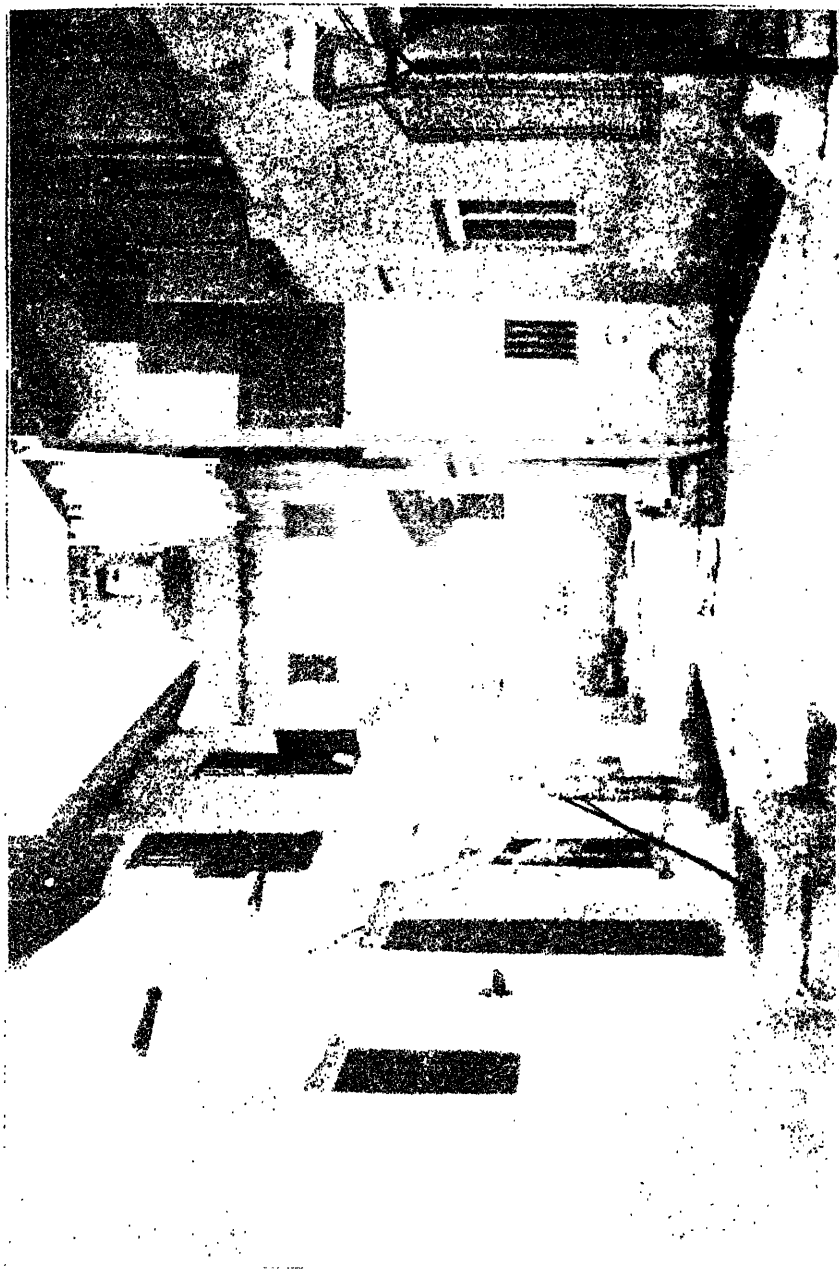
INTERIOR OF THE OLLUR CHURCH.



A MAPPILA BOY.



THREE TAMIL BRAHMANS.



JEW TOWN AT MATTANCHERRY





A GROUP OF YOUNG WOMEN OF THE WHITE JEWS.



A MARRIAGE GROUP OF ROMO-LATINITES.



A ROMO-SYRIAN BRIDE.

After this preparation, he proceeds to invite and welcome the *Vaiswadevas*, *Pitris*, *Vishnu* and the manes. First he places two little cushions of kusa grass on one side of the altar for the *Vaiswadevas*, and three in front of it for the *Pitris*. Each cushion should consist of three blades of grass folded up. After strewing kusa grass on these cushions, he says, "Shall I invoke the *Vaiswadevas*?" Being told "Do so", he thus invokes them "*Vaiswadevas*! hear my invocation, come and sit on this holy grass". After scattering barley on the same spot, he meditates this prayer "*Vaiswadevas*! listen to my invocation. Ye, who reside in this sky and ye who abide near us, (on earth) or (far off), in Heaven". "Ye whose tongues are fire, and ye, who defend the funeral sacrifice sit on this grass and be cheerful". He then invites the manes of the ancestors with similar invocations "O Fire! zealously we support thee; zealously we feed thee with fuel; eagerly dost thou call our willing ancestors to taste our oblations". "May our progenitors who eat the moon-plant, who are sanctified by holy fire, come by paths, which Gods travel. Satisfied with ancestral food at this solemn sacrifice may they applaud and guard us". He next welcomes the Gods and manes with oblations of water in vessels made of leaves, two are presented to the *Vaiswadevas*, and three to paternal ancestors and as many to maternal ancestors. Kusa grass is put into each vessel and water sprinkled on it, while the prayer—"May divine waters be auspicious to us," etc., is recited. Barley is thrown into the vessels intended for the *Vaiswadevas*, and *tilā* (sisamum) into those intended for the manes of ancestors, with these prayers:—"Barley! thou art the separator, separate us from our natural enemies and from our malicious foes. 2. Thou art *tilā*, sacred to Soma." At a *Srādhā* for the increase of prosperity which is performed on many occasions as a preparation for a solemn act of religion, barley is thrown into the vessels instead of *tilā*, and the last prayer is thus varied. "Thou art barley, sacred, to Soma; framed by the divinity thou dost produce celestial bliss; mixed with water mayst thou long satisfy with nourishment my several progenitors whose mouths are full of blessings". The vessels are successively taken up by the celebrant who repeats each time a prayer before recited:<sup>1</sup> "The water in

1. The Religious Ceremonies of the Hindus and of the Brahmins.  
Asiatic Researches, Vol. VII, pages 232--285.

Heaven, in the atmosphere and on the earth have been united with milk, etc."

The kusa grass that lay in the vessel is put into a Brahman's hand, and that which was under it is held by the person who performs the *Srādha* in his own hands, and through it he successively pours the water out of each vessel on the Brahman's hand. He then piles up the empty vessels in three sets, and reverses them, saying, while he oversets the first, "Thou art a mansion for ancestors".

The person who performs the *Srādha* next takes up rice smeared with clarified butter and makes two oblations to fire, reciting these prayers—"May this oblation to fire which conveys the offerings to the manes be efficacious". The Brahmins are then presented with new garments, sandal paste, flowers, etc.

The Brahmins should be fed with the residue of the oblation. It is accordingly consecrated for that purpose by the following prayer:—"The vessel that holds thee is the earth; its lid is sky; I offer you this residue of an oblation, similar to ambrosia, in the undefiled mouth of a priest; may this oblation be efficacious". The performer of the *Srādha* then points with his thumb towards the food, saying, "Thrice did Vishnu step, etc". He adds, "May the demons and giants that sit on this consecrated spot be dispersed." He meditates the *Gayatri* with the names of the worlds, and sweetens the food with honey or sugar, saying, "May winds blow sweet", etc. He then distributes the food among the Brahmins; and when they have eaten and have acknowledged that they are satisfied, he gives them water to rinse their mouths.

He now proceeds to offer the funeral cakes consisting of balls or lumps of cooked rice mixed with clarified butter. He offers three to the paternal and more to the maternal ancestors. The prayers "Ancestors! rejoice, take your respective shares," and the form of the oblation has been already mentioned. It is only necessary to add in this place that he wipes his hands with kusa grass in honour of remoter ancestors, who thus became partakers of the oblations.

In the next place, he makes six oblations of water from the palm of his hands, with salutation to the seasons. "Salutation unto you, O Fathers! and unto the saddening seasons," etc. By this prayer, the manes of ancestors are

doubly saluted ; for the Veda declares, " The six seasons are the progenitors of mankind."

A thread is placed on each funeral cake to serve as apparel for the manes, and each time the same words are repeated, " Fathers ! This apparel is offered unto you." Flowers, perfumes and similar things are added at pleasure, but water must be sprinkled on each cake with the prayer, " Waters ! Ye are the food of our progenitors ".

The performer of the *Sradha*, then takes up the cake in the middle and smells it ; or his wife eats it, if they be solicitous for male offspring. In this case, the following prayer must be recited :—"Grant, O Progenitors ! the conception of a male child (long lived and healthy, and the like), the lotus and garland (or twins that sprung from Aswini) ; so that, at this season there may be a person (to fulfil the wishes of the Gods, of the manes, and of human beings)"<sup>1</sup>. He then takes up the cakes, successively smells them, and throws them into a vessel and gives away the food to a mendicant priest or to a cow, or else casts it into the waters.

He then dismisses the manes, with presents of betel leaves, nuts, and a few annas saying, " Fathers ! to whom food belongs, guard our food and the other things offered by us, venerable and immortal as ye are and conversant with the holy truths. Quaff the sweet essence of it, be cheerful, and depart contented by the paths which Gods travel". Lastly, he walks round the spot and leaves it, saying, "May the benefit of this oblation accrue to me repeatedly ; may the Gods of the earth and the Goddesses of the sky whose form in the universe visit me with present and future happiness. Father and mother, revisit me when I again celebrate the obsequies. Soma, king of the manes ; visit me for the sake of (conferring) immortality."<sup>2</sup>

A *Sradha* is thus performed with an oblation of three funeral cakes only to three male paternal ancestors on such occasions ; or with as many funeral oblations to three maternal ancestors on others. Sometimes separate oblations are also presented to their wives of the paternal ancestors. Thus at the monthly *Sradhas* celebrated on the day of new moon,

1. The Religious Ceremonies of the Hindus and of the Brahmins.

2. Asiatic Researches, Vol. VII, pages 232-25.)

six funeral cakes are offered to three paternal and as many maternal male ancestors with their wives; on most other occasions, separate oblations are presented to the female ancestors. At the obsequies celebrated in the first half of Aswina, on the day entitled *Mahálaya*, funeral cakes are separately offered to every deceased friend and near relation; thus, immediately after offering the oblations to ancestors a cake is presented to a deceased wife, then to a son or daughter, to a brother or sister, to an uncle or aunt, to a father-in-law, to a preceptor, and lastly to a friend. The same is observed at the obsequies performed on the day of an eclipse, or upon a pilgrimage to a holy spot, and especially to Gaya. This kind of *Sradha* is called a *Pārvana Śrādha*, which is performed at new moon and at other periods of the moon's changes.

Besides the ceremonies described above, there are other customs in vogue among the Tamil Brahmins. There cannot be any cooking in the house of the deceased; and the chief mourner and the nearest relatives are fed during the days of pollution with the food cooked in a neighbouring house either at the mourners' own expense or at the expense of the husbands of the daughters, grand-daughters, or the parents of the daughters-in-law of the deceased. In wealthy families, the funeral festivities are very grand and provide for the feeding of a large number of Brahmins.

In the case of the death of an aged member in a Brahmin's family, a kind of weird dance by the female members, their relatives and neighbours is got up at nine o'clock at night from the second or third day, and continued till the tenth. The women collect together and perform a circular dance, singing special funeral songs, and beating on their uncovered bosoms; and finally mimic loud lamentations. This is continued till the tenth day, when a similar gathering takes place for the same purpose, after which they go in procession to the neighbouring tank or river, with their tresses of hair dishevelled and with their arms on each others shoulders, and return home in the same manner after their bath. The chief mourners and their close relatives are treated to a grand feast at the expense of the daughter's husband of the deceased or the parents of his daughter-in-law.

The funeral songs above referred to are said to have been composed by an old Tamil poet, and they are learned by the girls and young women along with the wedding and other songs. A woman should at least know one song about her grand parents, parents, brothers and sisters, husband, children, father and mother-in-law. It is not likely that these lamentations really express any genuine feelings in the hearts of the mourners; but the custom implies that such feelings are held in some estimation.

On the morning of the eleventh day, the woman whose husband is dead has her head completely shaved, and becomes a widow thereafter. Tonsure of widows. She remains in seclusion for a year, and wears white cloths for the rest of her life. Henceforth her status in society is one of degradation, and she cannot take part in any of the domestic ceremonies, such as weddings, nuptials and the like. Of all kinds of calamities or misfortunes that can happen to a woman, widowhood involving the loss of hair is considered to be the greatest.

The rules regarding the conduct of widows are like those regulating the conduct of *Sanyâsis* (ascetics). "Eating on metal plates, sleeping on the cot, chewing betel leaves (*thâmbula*), use of flowers, perfumes, etc., are all denied to the *Yati* and the widow alike. To all who are in a *Vrata*, the purification is like the *Yâti*s and so for the widow"<sup>1</sup>. Thus the sages have prescribed to the faithful widow a number of duties, the keynote of which is austerity.

It is interesting to enquire in this connection whether there is any religious sanction for the tonsure of widows. There are passages in the *Rig Vêda* which bear testimony to the fact that the preservation of hair on the woman's head adds to her beauty.<sup>1</sup> *Atharvâna Vêda* contains charms to stimulate and promote the growth of hair. "In order to strengthen the old hair, to beget the new, to render more luxurious that which has grown, the all healing plant, *Nitâni* in one of the remedial rites is prescribed in that *Vêda* for the growth of hair<sup>2</sup>. That plant was brought, it is said, by Jamadagni from the abode of Asita, for promoting the growth of hair of his daughter. It has the power to strengthen the roots, lengthen

1. R, V. I., II-1-5, VI.-55-2, IX. 67-11.

2. A, V. VI.-21,



the ends and expand the middle. Thus from ancient times the hair was prized as an aid to beauty.

The authorities for the tonsure of widows are very few. In the early Law Books, or Smrithis, of Apasthambha, Gautania, Vasishta, and Yagnavalkya, and in the Mahabharata, there is no mention of the custom. The widows then dressed the hair without the parting line or did not deck the hair. The only authorities in which mention is made of shaving, are the *Skānda Purāna* and *Vyāsa Smrithi*.

In all probability the custom has originated from the shaving of Buddhistic Nuns.

The Brahmans were, by Sastras, required to teach the Vedas, to look after the training and preservation of the moral, social and religious principles of the people, to perform and preside over the religious and sacrificial ceremonies, and also to aid rulers in the administration of justice. These duties were, in after times, discharged by some among them known as *Vaidiks*, while others called *Loukikas* were engaged in other occupations. At present, the priestly class of Brahmans and others proficient in the study of Sastras have, owing to the absence of sufficient encouragement, diminished in numbers, while others engage themselves in all occupations which afford decent income for their livelihood. The study of the *Vēdas* and *Sastras* is, in point of money earning, less popular among them, and its place is being taken up by western education. Brahman children, boys and young men, are being educated in all schools and Colleges, and take advantage of the instructions imparted in them; so that they form a conspicuous majority in the ranks of the literates. As in other districts, they are employed in all departments of Government service. Many are merchants, bankers, cultivators, and the like.

The Brahmans are strict vegetarians and teetotallers. Rice is the chief article of food, and other grains such as pulse, black, green and Bengal gram. and dhól are largely used in their daily meal. Milk, ghee, curds and butter milk are also used at every meal. All kinds of vegetables with the exception of onions and potatoes are freely used. Orthodox Brahmans have their dinner between eleven and twelve o'clock in the morning and supper at eight P. M.

with a lunch consisting of some bread and hot water seasoned with coriander, cumin and other seeds. Children and very young men and women have their break-fast, which consists of rice boiled during the previous night and mixed with water. A small quantity of this rice with butter milk and pickles is consumed at 8 A. M., and 4 P. M. in addition to their regular dinner and supper. An innovation has however taken place in this direction. Coffee or tea with bread has taken the place of cold rice and butter milk in the morning and evening.

The Tamil Brahmins form one division of the representatives in Southern India of the Aryan race, and have all the characteristics peculiar to the Arayan type. Partly owing to the influence of fusion and interminglings during the long lapse of time with the Dravidian population, some of the characteristics of the latter are found among them: and yet they can be distinguished from the rest of the community by their fair complexion and other physical and mental characters. Sir Herbert Risley considers the Brahmins of Southern India as belonging to the Aryo-Dravidian type.

The Tamil Brahmins are found in all shades of complexion, and are handsome in appearance. They are of the medium height. The orthodox Brahmins and others who do not possess western culture get their bodies clean-shaved at least once in every month, leaving a long tuft of hair on the back of the head which is made smooth by gingelly oil. It is now a kind of fashion among some young men and a few grown up men to have their heads cropped and keep the rest of the body unshaved on the pretext of better comfort and convenience. Some again shave their faces only. All these innovations are repugnant to the orthodox members. In this connection, it may be said that tonsure is one of the sixteen sacraments, and the preservation of a tuft of hair is necessary for the Brahmins on ceremonial occasions: and yet this fact is ignored by those who delight in the innovations above referred to.

The dress of the men of all sections is similar. Orthodox Brahmins and others wear *sóman*, a loin-cloth five yards in length and about one and a half yards in breadth. They also put on *Vaishitis* three yards in length and with the same breadth as that of the loin dress. In Malabar, Cochin, and

Travancore many, except on ceremonial occasions, wear *mundus*, (small loin dress) like the Nambuthiris and Nayars, with small ones thrown over their shoulders. The educated young men of these days wear costumes of European pattern. Unmarried young men and boys wear only *mundus*; boys and young men, in schools and Colleges, wear coats and caps, and the adoption of European costume is but a step higher. The hair on the head of a Brahman woman is parted in the middle and tied into a knot behind. It is well smoothened with gingelly or cocoanut oil.

The dress of the married woman is called a *Pudava*, which is a coloured cloth nine yards in length and two and a half cubits in breadth. Three or four folds of the cloth are held together on the left side of the loin, while the rest of it is passed between the legs to be tucked up behind rather tightly, and the remaining portion, after passing twice or thrice round the loin is carried over the right shoulder after covering the breast. Young women put on a petty coat or *ravikka*. A married woman wears a cloth of any colour except white, but an old woman generally wears only red cloths. A widow puts on a white cloth. A girl before marriage wears a *Pāvada*.

The men wear ear-rings, a waist-band of gold or silver and rings for the fingers. The women, on the other hand, are not sparing in the matter of ornaments, and their desire for them is unbounded and often beyond the means of their husbands. They have ornaments for the head, nose, ears, neck, arms, fingers, waist, feet, and in fact for every part of the body.

The following are the ornaments in common use among them :—

*Jatasingáram*.—It is a gold ornament which consists of a series of admirably carved minor ones, almost square in shape, attached together by gold wire and hooked so as to look like a single ornament. It is attached to the plaited hair by means of hooks.

*Nāgar*.—It is a delicately worked gold ornament, shaped like a hooded serpent, and generally placed at the back of the crown. This is now superseded by the *Rākkudi*. Below this are placed some minor ones named *Thāzhambu*, *Koppu* *Jadabelli*, worked in imitation of rose and other flowers.

*Rakkudi.*—It is an elaborately carved round-shaped ornament, kept in position on the crown of the plaited hair. In front of this, on either side, are two small gold ornaments, one circular and the other crescent-shaped, but these are now worn mostly by children.

*Jimiki.*—It is a pendent in the shape of an inverted cup made of gold sometimes set with rubies all over and with clusters of pearls hanging from the bottom. It is now out of fashion.

*Kammal or Olai.*—This is the most common ear ornament, and is made of gold or set with rubies or diamonds. The latter is now the fashion.

*Bulàkku.*—This is an ornament for the nose, and is made of gold and set with rubies or diamonds with a big pearl attached to its base. This is worn by girls and women below middle age.

*Nathu.*—This is a circular ring set with pearls and rubies, worked in fanciful shapes of birds and flowers. It is now out of fashion.

*Mukutti.*—This is worn on the right nostril, and a small hole is bored through the skin for the purpose.

*Kodi.*—A string of gold with the *táli* or marriage badge is worn round the neck by married women. This *táli* is never removed as long as the husband is alive.

*Kásumala.*—This is a garland of gold coins worn round the neck. Old Venetian Sequins were very common, but are now substituted by five-france French coins. Half sovereigns are also rarely used. The number of coins varies from fifty to a hundred. This jewel is a great favourite with women, and costs five or six hundred rupees. It is presented to the bride at the time of wedding.

*Saradu or Addiyal.*—This is a close fitting ornament worn round the neck.

*Kárai.*—This is a common ornament worn by children and young women. It consists of a pretty stiff gold wire with ten or twelve gold beads on each side of the hook.

*Káppu.*—Gold Bracelet.

*Pátil.*—Wristlet. It is a thin leaf of gold worn round the wrist. At the hook are placed two thin plates of gold half an inch square, either plain or set with precious stones.

*Valai* or *kankana*.—Glass bangles.

*Vanñi*.—This is a curiously worked ornament of gold, worn like a bangle round the upper arm. It is worn on both the upper arms.

*Oddiyānam*.—This is a silver or gold girdle, an inch or an inch and a half in breadth with a hook in front.

*Metti*.—This is a plain silver ring worn round the second toe of each foot, and produces a jingling sound on walking.

*Kāppu*.—These are plain silver rings worn on each leg.

*Golussu*.—This is another silver ornament of elaborate workmanship worn round each leg.

There are other old-fashioned silver ornaments—*Thanda*, *Pavasaram*, etc., which are not now in use.

Many of these ornaments are worn by grown up girls and young women who, after being blessed with a few children, become indifferent and limit their desire to the wearing of a few of them. *Kammal Kodi*, and a few necklets, *Kāsumala*, armlets *Kāppu* and *Golussu* are generally worn by them.

From the foregoing account of the customs and manners of the Tamil Brahmans, it may be seen that many of the old ideals are gradually disappearing. The old divisions among them exist more for the sake of marriage prohibitions than for anything else. The custom of matrimonial relations twenty years ago, was to select a suitable bride for a young man according to the old *Sāstraic* ideals, and give her ornaments in proportion to the means of the bridegroom's parents, which might in some cases form a nucleus for her maintenance in the event of her husband's premature death; but now this custom has so far changed that the husband has to be purchased at a price which has been enhanced by western education and culture. Parents with a few daughters and sons become poor by the marriage, of the former and by the education of the latter; and in the majority of cases, there is no chance of replenishing the family property by the joint labour of the sons, who generally shift for themselves when they are able to earn.

The daily routine of the Brahman in his family was, in former times, a series of religious observances, and the junior members, women and children, were in a kind of moral and religious atmosphere, from which they are now completely free,

The present social conditions of the Tamil Brahmans.

The various ceremonies which a Brahman has to perform are performed either without comprehending their real significance or purpose, or are sometimes overlooked with the exception of the ancestor worship (*Srādha*). The religious and moral education of boys and young men reading in schools and colleges leave very much to be desired according to the old Brahmanic ideals.

In point of occupation, they have adapted themselves to the modern environments, and are sufficiently speculative and enterprising. They are engaged in all occupations which afford them a decent income. Thus, many of the old customs are disappearing by the influence of western education and culture. The old Brahmanic ideals, under the same influence, will be a golden mean.

## CHAPTER XIII.

# THE EMBRANS AND THE KONKANI BRAHMAN.

### THE EMBRANS.

They are a class of Brahmans living in the 32 villages north of Perumpuzha, and are strictly speaking the Brahmans of Kerala. But they are now regarded as *Paradesis* (foreigners), because of their having declined to observe the customs introduced by Parasurama and afterwards by Sri Sankara. They are immigrants from South Canara and have never been domiciled here. They numbered 943 in the State at the last Census.

According to Tulu traditions, Parasurama, after the depopulation of the original settlers (Brahmans), procured for the reclaimed tract of Kerala, new Brahmans by taking the nets of some fishermen, and making a number of Brahmanical threads with which he invested the fishermen and made them Brahmans. He then retired to the mountains for *Tapas* (penance), telling them that if they were ever in distress and invoked him, he would come to their aid. After the lapse of some time, during which they were not in distress, they were curious to know if Parasurama would remember them, and invoked him as directed. He promptly appeared, but punished their mocking him by cursing them, and causing them to revert to their old status of Sudras. There were no Brahmans again in the land until Tulu Brahmans were brought from Ahikshetra by Mayura Varma of the Kadamba dynasty. This account is somewhat similar to that given about the *Sapagrasthas* among the Nambuthiris.

There are various traditions given about their immigration and settlement, but all agree in attributing the introduction of the Tulu Brahmans of the present day to Mayura Varma, in spite of the variations in detail regarding their immigration and settlement. One account says that the Habasikha chief of the

Parayas drove out Mayura Varma, but was afterwards in turn expelled by Mayura Varma's son or son-in-law Lokāditya, who brought Brahmans from Ahikshetra and settled them in the thirty-two villages. Another account makes Mayura Varma himself, the invader of the country, which was in the possession of the Parayas and fishermen who expelled Parasurama's Brahmans. A third account mentions the settlement of the Brahmans from Gokurnam, which is said to have been a Brahman settlement in very early times, and there was probably a further influx of Brahmans thither owing to the advance of Muhammadan conquests.

The thirty-two villages in which the Brahmans are said to have been settled by Mayura Varma are the important centres of Tulu Brahmans, who are considered to be the followers of Bhattacharya. They lived in several villages or places such as Sivalli, Kota, Koteswar and Kandawar, which became their recognized headquarters, and from which arose the names of the divisions among them. Kota, Kotéswar and Kandawar Brahmans speak the old Canarese language, and the Sivallis, the Tulu dialect.

These Tulu Brahmans who have settled in Malabar in comparatively recent years are known as Embrantiris or Embrans. They are found all over the Cochin State except in the Chittur Taluk. Some are Sāma Vedis following Aswālayana Grihya Sutras. They observe the rules and rites ordained by their original leader, Bhattacharya. Like other Brahmans, they practise infant marriage for girls, and observe the sixteen *Karmas* (ceremonies) and other customs.<sup>1</sup>

The Embrans found in the State are Sivite and Vaishnavite Brahmans from all these sections acting as priests in temples, or doing services as assistants under Nambuthiris, or cooks in palaces and private houses. Nambuthiri males and females generally interdine with them. In some places, however, they are not to enter the kitchens of Nambuthiris, nor do Nambuthiri women eat the food cooked by them. Next to Nambuthiris, they command a greater respect, probably on account of their Malayali origin and priestly service in temples.

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1. Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. I, page 376.



### THE KONKANI BRAHMANS.

The Konkani Brahmans come under one of the divisions of the *Pancha* (five) *Gaudas*, as distinguished from the *Pancha Dravidas*. They are an important community mostly found in the southern division of the State. In the last Census of the State, they numbered 8522, 4580 being males and 3942 females.

The original habitat of the Konkani Brahmans was the Punjab, where on the banks of the five rivers, settled the five tribes or peoples *Panchajana*, who in after times spread their civilization throughout India. Of these, some were settlers on the banks of the Saraswati, (supposed to be the modern Saraswati near Thaneswar), and this river which is the subject of several hymns of the *Rig Vêda*, is the most sacred of the ancient rivers, "worshipped even in that remote period". It is also said, that the ancestor of the tribe on the banks of the Saraswati, was *Sâraswata*, son of Dadhicha, and is known in the *Vêdic* literature as *Saraswata* or *Saraswan* (*Rig Veda*, VII, 96). When all other Brahmans lost the knowledge of the Vedic literature owing to the great famine that drove them to various places in India, they, in order to regain their knowledge, had perforce to become the pupils of *Sâraswata*, and to acknowledge him as their spiritual preceptor. It is an admitted fact that the current recension of the *Taittiriya-Vêda* is that settled by *Sâraswata*, and differs from that detailed in the *Grihya Sutra* of *Satyâshâda*, while the *Salya Parvam* of the *Mahabharata* describes him "as the foremost of the *Rishis* of unrivalled splendour and God-like mien". It is from this most celebrated ancient sage that the Konkanas derive their name as the Gauda *Sâraswata* Brahmans.

As their numbers increased, the Aryans left the banks of the sacred Saraswati, moved eastwards and onwards into Bengal, and settled in Trihotrapura, (modern Tirhut in Mithila). The ancient name of this central part of Bengal was Gauda; and the immigrants into that part got the name of Gauda *Saraswata* Brahmans, a name by which one of the five divisions is known.

In common with the other Brahmans of India, the Gauda *Saraswata* Brahmans believed in the traditional origin of the first *Varna*, from the mouth of the *Virat Purusha*—the universal spirit—as recorded in the *Purusha Sûkta* of the Vedas, in the *Itihasas* and *Purânas*.

The Sahyādrī-Kānda of the Skānda-Purāna contains the traditional history of all the Brahmans that have settled on the West Coast. The first chapter of *Uttara Rahasya* of the Sahyādrī-Kānda (verses 47-54) gives a short account of the history of this community.

To assist him at sacrifices and at *Sradhas*, and to entertain his guests, Parasurama, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu, brought from Trihotrapura, 'Brahmans of ten *Gotras*', settled them in the districts of Gomanchala, Panchakrośa, and Kusasthali.

In other parts of the work some more *Gotras* are mentioned, and this accounts for the fourteen *Gotras* now extant among the members of the community. Tradition says that on the information of the prosperity and affluence of their brethren in their new homes, *i. e.*, the land of their transplantation four more *Gotras* of people came from Tirhut and settled in Goa. Those who were brought were settled in a group of sixty-six villages or hamlets, hence called *Sassasti* or *Shatshasti*. The others who followed the first batch from Tirhut settled in the district of Tiswadi, which means thirty villages or hamlets. Thus the number of villages occupied by the two batches of immigrants amounted to ninety-six, and the people were known as Shenvi Brahmans—Shenvi being a corruption of *Shannovi* derived from the Sanskrit *Shannavati*—meaning ninety-six. The fifth chapter of the *Uttara Rahasya* of the *Sahyādrī-Kānda* gives an account of the settlement on the plots of land assigned by Parasurama to each of the sixty-six families that constituted the ten *Gotras*. There is also reason to believe that the names—*Shenivis* and *Sasasthikars*—were at first convertible terms and used indiscriminately; but at present, the name *Shenvi* is restricted to the Sivite section of the community and the other term *Sasasthikars* to the Vaishnava section.

As Goa was the most important settlement in southern Konkani, one of the seven Provinces reclaimed by Parasurama from the Sea, the Gauda Saraswata Brahmans who settled in Goa were called Gauda Saraswata Konkani Brahmans.

The Puranic account of the colonization of Konkani by the Aryans of Trihotrapura under their leader Parasurama places their advent to the

The probable period  
of their Settlement in  
Konkan-Goa.

I. Ten *Gotras*—Bharadwaja, Kausika, Vatsa, Kaundinya, Kasyapa, Vasishta, Jamadagni, Viswamitra, Gautama, and Atri.

west coast many centuries before the christian era. As sober history is not prepared to accept the Puranic chronology, it is desirable to fix the date of their settlement in Goa. The references to Gomanchala, Sourashtra, Konkan in the Mahabharata, its supplement Harivamsa and in the Bhagavata, and other Puranas go to show that Konkan and Goa were Aryan settlements long before the composition of these works. The affinities of the Konkani Brahmans language with Prakrit and Mithili tend to prove that the migration must have taken place soon after the breaking up of Sanskrit into countless Prakrita dialects of which only a few are preserved in literature. It is therefore highly probable that the original immigrants from Trihotrapura left their northern home shortly after the rise of Buddhism. As Tirhut formed the southern district of Mithila which became the headquarters of Buddhism, Brahmanism must have sustained a terrible check and must have been almost suppressed. The great sacrifices must have fallen into disuse; Vedic scholarship which was essentially necessary for the careful performance of the sacrifices must have been disregarded; and consequently the means of sustenance for Brahmans must have disappeared. This may be supposed to be the probable cause of their deserting Trihotrapura and settling in Goa.

Emigration and Settlement of the Konkans in Cochin.

When Goa was conquered by Vijayanagar, these Saraswata Brahmans placed themselves under the protection of the rulers of that kingdom. For nearly a quarter of a century after the conquest of Goa by the Portuguese they continued unmolested under the Portuguese Governors. During that period they took to a lucrative trade in European goods; but with the establishment of the Inquisition at Goa, and the religious prosecution set on foot by the Portuguese, the community left Goa in voluntary exile. While some submitted to conversion, others fled to the north and south; and those that fled to the south, settled themselves in Canara and Calicut. Receiving a cold reception at the hands of the Zamorin, they proceeded further south and sought the protection of the rulers of Cochin and Travancore, where they flourish even to this day. The christian converts who followed in the wake of the first batch of exiles settled themselves in the important centres of trade



VARIAR WITH NIVEDIUM (SACRIFICIAL RICE) IN A BELL METAL VESSEL (URULI) AND TWO VARASSIARS.



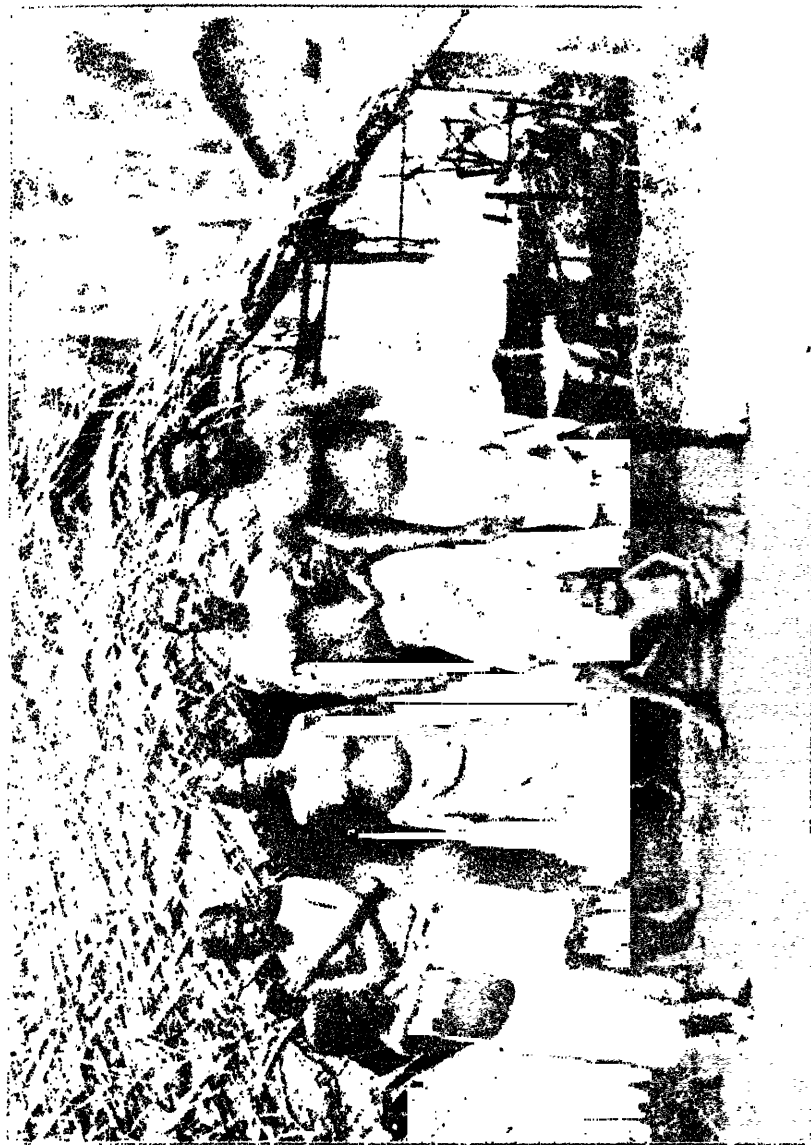
THREE PISHARODI WOMEN.



A GROUP OF POTHUVARISSIARS.

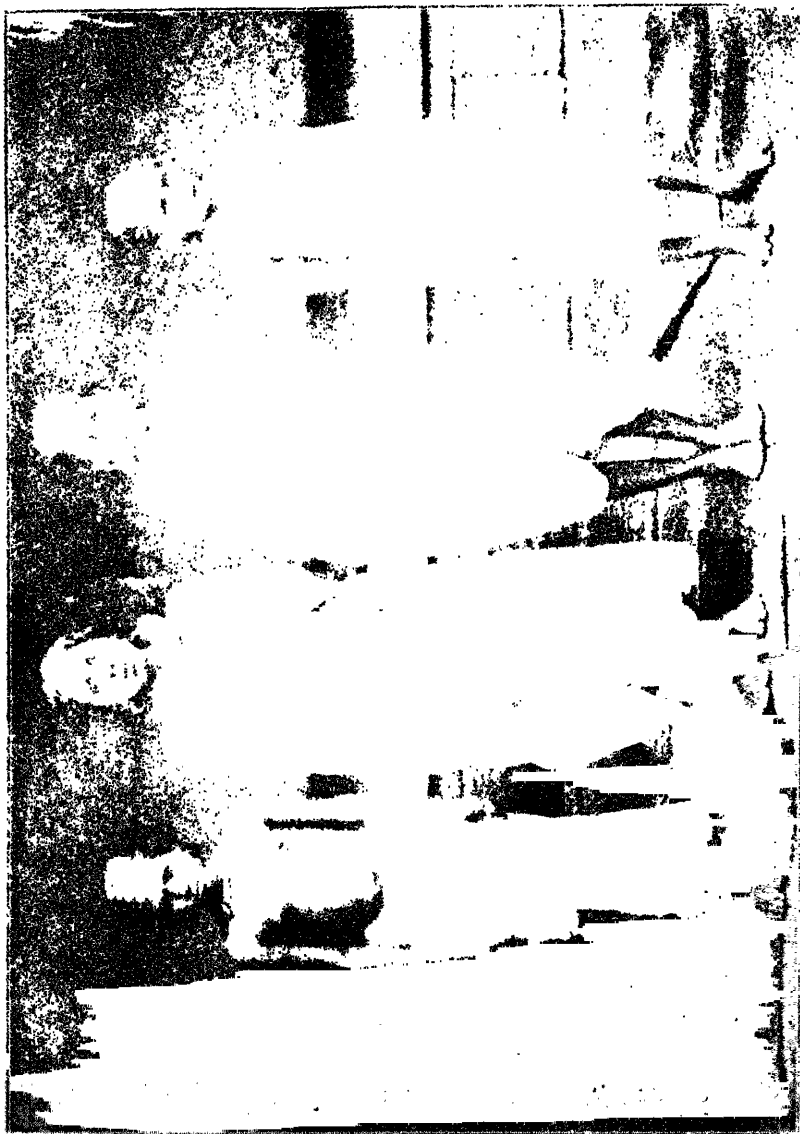


A GROUP OF MARAKS WITH MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS



CHALIANS WITH THEIR TINY WORKSHOP.





ADIKAL WOMEN.



MUTTATUS.



A CHAKIYAR AND TWO NANGIYARS.

in the State as copper-smiths, and they are even now deriving a profitable trade in copper wares. The Brahman immigrants are called Konkani, because of their having emigrated from Konkani; and they speak the Konkani dialect of Marathi.

Marriage is allowed within the pale of the community.

**Marriage Prohibitions.** The sections of the community that do not object to interdining have no objection to

intermarrying. The Vaishnavites, and Sivites among the Gauda Saraswata Brahmans freely interdine and intermarry. The prohibition of the marriage of the same Gotra and Pravara, as well as of *Sapindas*, is in force among these Brahmans. The children of sisters though they belong to different Gôtras are not allowed to intermarry. The marriage to a paternal aunt's daughter or to a maternal uncle's daughter, though not sanctioned by the *Smritis* and though not prevalent among other branches of Gauda Saraswata Brahmans, has in imitation of the custom of the Dravida Brahmans been introduced. But such marriages do not at all amount to an injunction. The marriage to one's sister's daughter, which obtains among Dêsastha and Karnâtake Brahmans, is not in vogue among the Gauda Saraswata Brahmans.

The community holds that, of the Samskaras (sacraments), marriage is the most important, as it at once establishes a relation between the past

**Marriage.**

and the future, and links the living and the dead, and as the object of marriage is to hand down the ancient religion and to keep up the uninterrupted offering of the *pindas* to the *pitris* at their *Srâdha*. All the Samskaras are to be performed by a *Grihastha* or house-holder in the *Grihya*-fire, the fire which he has to maintain for ever after his marriage. The *Grihastha* is to support all other *Asramas*. In short, the immediate object of marriage is to bring up children for the preservation of the race and for convenience to all beings.

Marriage is Brahma in form; the bridegroom is invited to take to wife, the bride, properly adorned and dressed. Though there is no reference to horoscopes in the Vedas, the *Grihya Sûtras*, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata or the Puranas, the consultation of horoscopes has become the prime factor in marriage alliances. If the horoscopes agree, the father of the

girl to be married negotiates with the father of the boy, and when they have come to a definite understanding and settlement, the bride's father arranges for the public declaration of the intended matrimonial alliance. He invites his friends and relations as well those of the bridegroom, the *Purôhita* (priest) of the bride's father states on behalf of the latter, the conditions of the marriage which the *Purôhita* of the bridegroom's father accepts on behalf of the latter; and if the hour and the date of the wedding is settled previously, one of the priests reads the *Panchangam* (almanac) of the day and announces the hour fixed for the wedding ceremony. After the offering of sweets and flowers, the sprinkling of rosewater, and distribution of *pan-supâri*, the assembly disperses. This is called *Nischayatâmbula* and corresponds to *Kanya-Varana*.

It is followed by *Vâgdâna* or the betrothal—a ceremony forming an essential part of the marriage. It is performed either a few days before the wedding or on the day preceding it.

In accordance with the injunction of Aswalyana that a Brahmachari who has performed the *Samâvartana* ceremony shall stay in a house where he will be honoured with the offering of *Madhuparka*, the *Samâvartana* is celebrated on the day preceding the wedding, if the wedding happens to be on the fore-noon of the next day; but if the marriage takes place in the evening, the ceremony of *Samâvartanam* is finished on the same day; after which the bridegroom with his friends and relations is invited by the father of the bride to his house. If the bridegroom is poor, the expenses of the *Samâvartanam* are defrayed by the bride's father, and in this case, the bridegroom is for the first time, invited to his house the evening previous to the *Samâvartanam*.

At sunrise or sunset according as the wedding takes place during the day or at night, *Ghatikithapana* is made in the bride's house, an antiquated mode of determining the hour of wedding by means of a metal bowl which is left afloat in the consecrated water. There is a little hole in the bottom of the bowl through which water slowly enters. When the bowl is filled to a certain point, it sinks and indicates one *Ghati*—one hour of 24 minutes' duration. The round is repeated until the hour of wedding arrives.

Then the parents with their daughters enter the *Mandapa*, the place intended for the celebration of the marriage, and

perform the *Mandapa-Pratishta*,<sup>1</sup> *Ganapathy Puja*,<sup>2</sup> *Punyahavachana*,<sup>3</sup> *Matrika Puja*,<sup>4</sup> and *Nandisradha*.<sup>5</sup> Then the parents go to invite the bridegroom's party and the girl is engaged in worshipping Gauri, Hara, and Sachi in the inner apartment of the house.

On the arrival of the bridegroom, lamps are waved before him; he is seated on a reserved seat, honoured as a guest, and is offered the *Madhuparka*—the highest mark of respect. The bridegroom then stands up while a thin piece of cloth is held in front of him as a screen, and the bride is carried to the place by her maternal uncle, and is made to stand facing the bridegroom. Priests recite the Surya-hymn (X. 85, Rig Veda) and certain portions of the *Taittiriya Brahmana*; on this occasion women are also expected to sing auspicious songs. The priests announce the *Gotra* and *Pravara* of the two parties to be united in wedlock, the names of the father, grandfather, and great grandfather, after which the screen is removed and the bridegroom and the bride are enabled to see each other. The bridegroom then touches the middle of the forehead of the bride with the blade of a Darbha grass, and the bride and the bridegroom pour rice on each other's head. The bride's father touches the feet of his elders, and with their permission consecrates water for giving away his daughter in marriage, and with a stream of this water gives her to the bridegroom and, instructing him in his future behaviour, receives from him a promise so to act. The bride's father presents to his son-in-law a small sum of money tied in a piece of cloth together with rice and one or two pieces of turmeric as *Dakshina* for accepting the gift. This is called *Varadekshina*. The bridegroom with certain *mantrams* touches the abdomen of the girl. They are sprinkled over with the water that remains after the *Dhára*. The *Mangalasara* is next tied round the wrist of the married couple, who once again scatter rice on each other's head. The husband takes from his head a flower, dips it in milk and ghee and with it makes a mark on the forehead of the bride, who in turn, taking a flower from her head, makes a mark on his.

1. Installation of the marriage dais.

2. Worship of Ganapathy.

3. Recitation of the mantrams for sanctifying water.

4. Puja to mother.

5. Worship of ancestors.

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They garland each other, and the husband puts the *Mangalasutra* round the bride's neck, adorns her with other jewels and presents her with cloths. The bride is made to wear an upper garment (*uttariya*) to one of the corners of which is tied an arecanut, and a piece of gold and a corner of this *uttariya* is tied to a corner of the husband's upper garment: This represents the union of husband and wife in all religious duties, and matrons bless the union by scattering rice on the heads of the married couple. The bride and bridegroom then jointly worship Mahalakshmi, Parvati and Sachi, after which they enter the *Mandapa* perform the hymeneal *Homa*, and in the presence of the sacred fire the bride-groom takes the hand of the bride (*Panigrahana*) and leads her round the fire (*Parinayana*). He asks her to ascend a mill-stone, so that she may be firm and constant, and makes her step on seven small grains of rice. This makes the marriage complete—*Saptapadi*. The priest sprinkles water over their heads, while they look in a mirror placed on the floor: and the priest finishes the *Homa*, and the ceremony of the waving lights is performed by women. Then the married couple go into an apartment where they take their meals and sleep in it. The nuptial fire is maintained for three nights, and *Aupasana* is observed. On the fourth day, at nightfall, the married couple take their bath, put on white clothes, and are honoured by the parents of the bride, and they perform a *Nagabali*. Then the bride is taken to the bridegroom's house; the married couple are not allowed entrance by the husband's sister until they promise that the daughter of their union shall be wedded to her son. The bridegroom makes presents of clothes or money to his sister and is then allowed to take his wife into the house. They worship at the doorsill, enter the house, and the young wife is installed as the queen (*Samragini*) of the house, and is called by a new name. After this ceremony they return to the bride's house, and next day complete the marriage by a *Mangala-snana* (bath after the marriage) and *Brahmana-bhojana* (feeding of Brahmans). After the entertainment the Brahmans invoke blessings on the married couple.

It has been thought necessary to enter into all the details of the marriage as prevalent among the Gauda Saraswata Brahmans, because they are surrounded in Canara mostly by

*Yajur-Vedis* of the Boudháyana school, and in Kerala by *Yajur-Vedis* of the Apàsthamba school, who believe that the form and procedure of marriage obtaining among them are the orthodox ones and that all other forms must necessarily be unorthodox, and cavil at other forms. The *Saptapadi* is the most essential part of the marriage, indissoluble among the members of the community. It is not correct to say that the marriage becomes binding on the parties only after the celebration of the ceremonies of the fourth day.

Asvalayanacharya himself admits that diversity of marriage customs exists in towns and villages, and the commentator adds that the various customs obtaining in towns, villages and one's own family may be observed, but not combined in marriage. In the course of their peregrinations the Gauda Saraswata Brahmans have not been slow to adopt marriage customs from their neighbours, the Dravida Brahmans, and this is more especially true of the *Vaishnavà* section who have made the marriage ruinously elaborate. Consequently, this ceremony among the rich lasts for eight days and among others for five days. An attempt has now been made to bring the wedding into strict conformity with the precept of *Asvalayana* and thus revive the ancient ideal. Out of considerations for convenience and interest, the *Grihapravésana Homa* (oblations to fire after entering into the husband's house) which ought to be performed in the bridegroom's house, that is, her new home and which is aptly called *Grihapravésaniya hóma*, is in violation of Asvaláyana's injunction combined with the *Làjahoma*. The *Aupàsana*, and the minimum Brahmacharya of three days are observed in the bride's house; and this adds unnecessarily to the cost of the wedding. The party of rival, consistent with the injunctions of *Asvalayana Grihya Sutr*s 1, 7, 21, insist on the starting of the married couple to the bridegroom's house with the nuptial fire on the very night of the wedding on performing the *Grihapravésaniya Hóma* there, or observing the *Aupàsana* and the *Brahmacharya* for three days, and concluding the marriage with a *Mangala-snàna*, *Brahmanabhojana* and *Asirvada* (blessings to the married couple). As this form of marriage—the form authorised by the Asvalayanacharya—is obtaining among the members of the community in the Bombay Presidency, in Goa, Indore, and Gwalior and is



practised by the Haviġa and Shivalli Brahmans in Canara ; it was recommended to the members of this community in Canara, Malabar, Cochin and Travancore, at the grand conference of the representatives of the community from all parts of India held in December 1908 and more than fifty marriages have already been performed in accordance with it.

As the girl has to be disposed of before she attains puberty and proper matches are difficult to make as the selection must be within the community, marriage has become ruinously expensive and, in common parlance, synonymous with bankruptcy. The bridegroom has to be given a large sum of money, the major portion of which is converted into jewels for the bride, clothes, a gold ring and utensils for daily worship ; jewels and clothes and money are to be presented to the bride ; presents of clothes are to be made to the relations, and the castemen and women are to be sumptuously entertained for four days. In Cochin and Travancore much money is squandered on nautches, music and fireworks. These items involving the expenditure of a large sum of money bring ruin to families and make men dread the birth of a daughter and look upon it as a certain misfortune. To mitigate the evil, however, some of the intelligent families have set the example of investing the dowry in a Bank or on land in the name of the bride and thus obviating extravagant waste of it on idle shows at the marriage.

All pre and post-natal ceremonies performed by the Konkana Brahmans, and the customs connected with polygamy, adultery and divorce are mostly similar to those in vogue among other classes of Brahman, and are avoided for the sake of repetition.

Inheritance is from father to son. In British territory the inheritance is regulated according to the Hindu Law. In Cochin and Travancore, the property of all people who die without heirs goes to the Devaswam, the authorities of which direct certain ceremonies to be performed on the anniversary of the death of such persons.

When it is found difficult to settle points of social or religious law, Manu, Yājñavalkya, and Angirasa have laid down rules for the constitution of *Parishads*, whose decision is to be accepted as final. The *Parishad* may consist of three, four and not more than ten members.

In villages where the community is not large the temple committee is called *Dhajana*, the ten. With the growth of democratic ideas these terms are now applied to the whole assembly of members of the community when they are gathered to discuss any question regarding the caste or temple. Transgressions of caste rules, failure to undertake religious work connected with the temple and other matters affecting the interest of the community are discussed, and if the matters are within the competence of the people, they are settled; if not, they are referred to the *Swamis*.

In common with other Brahmans the Konkanis hold the Védas as the highest scriptural authority.

Religion. Their ritual being based on the Védas, and their religious ceremonies being performed with the recitation of *Mantras*, their religion is in this aspect Védic. In so far as the worship of the deities extolled in the *Puranas* and the rites or ceremonies and vows recommended by the *Puranas*, find favour with them, their religion is Puranic. They belong to the *Sa-kala Sāka* of the Rig Veda, and follow the *Sūtras* of Asvalayana in the performance of their *Śrouta* and the *Grihya-karmas*. They have no objection to accept other *Grihya Sūtras* if they are in conformity with Asvalayana's *Sūtras*. In addition to the *Śrouta* and the *Grihya Sūtras* of their *Acharya* they accept as authority of the *Grihyaparishishta*, the supplement to the *Grihya Sūtras*, Kumarilabhatta's *Grihya-karikas*, *Sounakya-prajyōga* and *Narayana Bhatta's prayōga-Ratna*. *Prayoga-parijata* quoted by Narayana Bhatta is also looked upon as an authority in certain matters. In the course of their *Brahmayajna* they repeat the first verse of the *Yājñavalkya Smṛiti* which may be taken as the legal code of the community. This code is elaborately commented on by Vijnanésvara, Aparārka and Sulapāni. Apararka's commentary is accepted in settling questions relating to social and religious matters and Vijnanésvara in strictly legal matters. The association of the Sage Yājñavalkya with the court of Janaka and the residence of the community in Trihōtarapura make it probable that the Dharmasastra of the community is Yājñavalkya Smṛiti. Though Yajnavalkya Smṛiti is the Smṛiti intended for *Svādhyāya*, other Smṛitis are also appealed to as authorities. The Vaishnava section of this community accept

the compilations made by Sri Madhwacharya and his successors.

*Puranic Religions.*—The sixteen *Samāskaras* sacraments and the funeral rites enumerated above are vedic in their nature. It is now time to advert to the rites and ceremonies enjoined by the *Puranas* and practised by the community. For purposes of religious observances, this caste follows the lunar year beginning with the month of Chaitra. (March-April).

The following is a list of religious holidays:—

*Chaitra.*

1. The first of the bright half is Yugādi the New year's day.
2. Ramanavami—Sri-Rama's birthday.
3. Full-Moon—Hanuma Jayanti.

*Vaishaka.*

4. Akshaya-Tritiya—Parasurama Jayanti.
5. Narasimha Jayanti—the fourteenth of the bright-half.
6. Full-moon—Karma Jayanti.

*Jyashtha.*

7. Fourteenth of the bright-half—Vata-Savitri-Vrata.

*Ashada.*

8. Sukla-Dashami—Chaturmāsa begins.
9. Sukla-Ekadeshi (eleventh day after full-moon).
10. Sukla-Dwadeshi (twelfth day after full-moon).

These three days as well as the corresponding three days in the bright half of the month of Kārtika are looked upon as of special sanctity.

*Śravana.*

11. Nāga-Panchami—on which day Nagas are worshipped.

12. Upākarma is performed on a day when the moon is in the asterism called *Śravana*. This generally takes place on the day of the full-moon. If an eclipse of the moon takes place on that day the *Upākarma* is performed on the *Panchami* when the moon is in the asterism called *Hasta*.

13. Krishnashtami—the birthday of Sri-Krishna.

*Bhadrāpāda.*

14. Gauri-Tritiya—Gauri puja and Vayana dāna.
15. Vinayaka Chaturthi—Ganapathi pūja.
16. Anantha Vrata.
17. The dark half of this month is *Mahālaya paksha* when on certain days Sradha for all *Pitris* is performed.
18. Mahalaya—*Amdvasi*.

*Ashvāyuja.*

19. The first nine days of this month constitute the Navaratri. Many observe fasts and devote themselves to the worship of Durga and read *Devimahatmya*.
20. Lalita-Panchami.
21. Mahanavami.
22. Vidyadesami.

It is to be noted that on the days of the Navaratri consecrated to the *Kuladevatas* (family deities), they are specially worshipped, and that Brahmins and *Suvasanis* (married women) are sumptuously entertained. On these days, the ears of the children are bored for the first time. On the *Desami*, boys are taught the letters of the alphabet.

23. The full-moon of Asvayuja is *Agrāyanam*, the Indian harvest feast—when new rice is eaten.

24. The fourteenth of the dark half is *Naraka Chaturdeshi* or *Dipāvali*.

*Kartika.*

25. Sukla Dashami. (The tenth day after new-moon.)
  26. Sukla Ekadeshi (The eleventh day after new-moon.)
  27. Sukla Dwadeshi—Tulasi puja.
- All these three days are very important to the Vaishnavas.
28. Full-Moon—Vyasa puja and Dipotsava.

*Margashira.*

29. Subramanya Shashti.

*Māgha.*

In most temples of the community in Canara and Malabar five days' *Utsava* is held from the third of the bright half of this month.

30. Rathasaptami.
31. Mahāsivaratri.

On these days rites and ceremonies laid down in the Purana and systematized in the work called Varataraja are performed. All *Sumangalis* (married women) worship *Tulasi devi*; and Sūrya Narayana on all Sundays and Fridays in the month of *Sravana*. Particular modes of life, food, worship, etc., are prescribed for each of the lunar months in the *Mahatmyas* of the months. Of these months Kartika and Māgha are the most popular. The *Adhikamāsa* or the intercalary month is observed by some in the hope of realising the merits promised for such observances.

*Astrological ceremonies.*—To propitiate the planets whose position is astrologically inauspicious or dangerous to life various ceremonies are observed; and presents are given to *Purohitas* who are engaged to perform *hómams* for muttering *Mantras* (japa), and for reciting *Shotras*—eulogiums in veneration of the deities presiding over the planetary orbs.

From the nature of the *Kula-devatas* or tutelary deities worshipped by the Gauda Saraswata Brahmins on their arrival in Goa, it will appear that these Brahmins were originally Bhagavatas *i. e.*, making no difference between Vishnu and Siva. The community at present consists of two sects, Saivites and Vaishnavites. The Saivites are under the spiritual jurisdiction, of their Guru whose chief monastery is called *Kaivalya-Māta*. Unbroken tradition points to the famous Gaudapāda Vivaranacharya, the guru of the famous Govinda, more famous *yati*, who was the preceptor of Sri Sankaracharya, as the reputed founder of this *Māta*. The Saivites are mostly found in the Bombay Presidency, Savantawadi, Baroda, Indore, and Gwalior. All questions, social, religious and spiritual, affecting the Saivites are settled by their Guru, whose decision in such matters is final. They follow the Advaita school of the Vedānta philosophy as expounded by Sri Sankaracharya, make no distinction between Vishnu and Siva in point of superiority, and are still Bhāgavatas. They use holy ashes for marking the various parts of the body and put on a *tilaka* on the forehead. Women use *kunkuma* for the *tilaka*, which is a horizontal streak along the forehead.

The Gauda Sāraswata Brahmins in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore are generally Vaishnavites. They follow the Dravida

system of Vedānta as expounded by Sri Madhwachārya, look upon Vishnu as the highest deity and all other Gods and Goddesses as Vishnu's servants, carrying out his orders about the preservation of the universe, and worship them in that light. Sri Madhwachārya founded in the thirteenth century A. D. the Vaishnava sect, refuted twenty-one creeds and for the spread of his creed journeyed towards the north of India. When he arrived in Goa, he made proselytes in his form of Vaishnava faith a number of Shenvis, who till then were followers of Siva and disciples of the *Kaivalya Māta*. These proselytes were mostly from the Sasasthikars, that is, those who occupied the tract now known as Salsette in Goa. Hence the term Shenvi became restricted to the Saivas, and the name Sasasthikars or Konkana Brahmans to the Vaishnavites. Though converts to Madhwa faith, they have always moved on excellent terms with their *Saiva* brethren, interdining and intermarrying as if no change had taken place in the form of their religion.

The Vaishnavites use *Gopichandana* instead of using ashes in marking the body with caste signs, wear *Urdhwa Pundra* and stamp them with the four weapons of Vishnu—*Sankha*, *Chakra*, *Gada*, *Padma*, and a square stamp called *Narayana* from the fact of its nine squares being filled with the letters of *Narayana Shatākshara* mantra. The Guru brands the disciples on the occasion of their visits with silver stamps of *Sankha* and *Chakra*. There is no objection to the use of sandalwood for making caste marks by *Grihasthas*. Women mark their forehead with *Kunkuma* made of turmeric, and mark with *Gopichandana* the upper arms and the temples with Vishnu's arms. Widows use only *Gopichandana* and do not make a *Tilaka* of *Kunkuma*.

While in Goa, the Gauda Saraswata Brahmans worshipped their tutelary deities brought from Tirhut. With the development of the Puranic religion, the number of Gods increased and some of these were claimed as *Kuladēvatas*. So, at present, there are many more *Kuladēvatas* than those enumerated in the Sahyadri Khanda. Of these two became most popular and have been worshipped as *Grāma-Dēvatas*; one of these is *Vittoba*, whose shrine is in Pandarpur and who is most popular

in the Bombay Presidency, and the other is Narasimha; whose worship they adopted from the Vijayanagar rulers who held sway in Goa. When they came to the Malabar coast, they brought with them the worship of these Gods. After their settlement in Canara, they adopted in addition the worship of Sri Venkitaramana of Tirupathi in North Arcot District, as that deity was found by them to be the most popular of all among the Vaishnavites of the Madras Presidency. Thus these Brahmans have come to worship one or more of these Gods in their private houses or their public temples; but no family in Canara and Malabar has denounced the worship of its tutelary deities originally brought from Tirhut. Their temples in Canara and Malabar are dedicated to Vittoba, Narasimha or Venkitaramana, but in Cochin and Travancore they are generally dedicated to Venkitaramana, whose temple is called Tirumala Devaswam. The word Tirumala is the Tamil equivalent to the Sanskrit Srisaïla, the mountain on which the famous temple of Venkitaramana is built in Tirupati. Tirumala is not derived from the name of Tirumala Raja of Vijayanagar, but the Raja was named after the mountain Tirumala. The mountain had various names in Sanskrit and many proper names are derived from these synonyms, such as Seshagiri, Séshadri, Séshachala, Venkitachala, Venkatagiri, Venkatadri, Venkitapati, Venkatésa, etc. Divine service in these temples is performed by Vaidiks of the community. Brahmans of other communities are on no account engaged to perform the puja, etc., in the temple, nor are they admitted within the temple.

In regard to the disposal of the dead, the invariable rule  
**Funeral Customs.** is cremation; but in case of the death of infants or of persons dying of small-pox and leprosy, their remains are buried. Obsequies are performed in accordance with the *Sounakya Prayoga*. On the eleventh day after death, the rich let loose a bull (*Vrishotsarga*). In conformity with the instructions of Sri-Krishna recorded in the *Préta-Kalpa* of the Garuda-purana, *Sapindikarana*, which ought to be performed at the end of the year, is performed on the twelfth day. In order to be entitled to perform this ceremony earlier, one has to offer the sixteen *Masika-Sradhas* on that day. After the *Sapindikarana* the sixteen *Masika-Sradhas*

are performed as they fall due in the course of the year at the end of which comes the *Abāika*, the first annual *Srādha*.

Parvana *Srādha*, at which three Brahmins are entertained at the *Pūrvapankti*, is observed among the rich only. On account of the difficulty of finding out properly qualified persons for entertainment at the *Pūrvapankti* of *Srādha*, Shri Madhwa-chārya has been pleased to sanction the performance of *Srādha* on *Chataka-krama*, which prevails largely among all Madhwa Brahmins. According to this plan, no Brahmins are at all entertained at the *Pūrvapankti*, and preparations intended for the *Srādha* are served on two leaves, one of them being intended for the Vaiswa-Dēvas and the other for the Pitris; both are invited to accept the offerings of food, etc., and are believed and treated as present. While the Gods and the Pitris are engaged in partaking of the feast, the *Yajamāna* (performer) under the guidance of the *Purōhita* prepares three *Pindas* of rice and offers them to the spirit of the person whose *Srādha* he is performing; of father or mother, of grandfather or grandmother, of great grandfather or great grandmother respectively according as the Pitri is father or mother.

After the conclusion of the *Srādha*, whether *Pārvana* or *Chātaka*, the *Yajamāna* performs the *Brahmayajna* and *Tarpana* and dines with his *Purōhita*, friends and relations. This service is called *Uttara-Pankti-Brahmanā-Bhōjana*. If death takes place at a very distant place, or if the person is lost by water or fire, and if consequently the bones are not forthcoming, the obsequies are performed according to the procedure called *Palāsa-Vidhi*.

As *Sapindikarana* is performed on the twelfth day after death, there is no need for *Mārana-Diksha*, which is so very common among the Nambuthiris. It is not observed among this community.

The funeral ceremonies constitute the *Antyeshti*—the final service, in as much as the body consecrated by the forty *Samskāras* and purified by the rites and ceremonies of a lifetime is rendered acceptable to Agni and offered as a *Purnāhuti* to that Fire, which was first kindled by the married couple in their house.



Impurity of child-death and birth lasts for ten days. This is the general rule, but in the case of death of children below three years, the period varies.

In Cochin, the Konkanis are mostly traders; but law,  
Occupation. medicine, teaching and other learned professions  
which are pursued by the members of their  
community in other places are beginning to be pursued by  
them in the State also.

It is a well-known fact that Gaudas and Dravidas do not  
Social status. interdine and intermarry. Nor do the Gaudas  
among themselves enjoy such social equality.  
On their migration to the South, the Gauda Saraswata Brah-  
mans found their neighbours the Drāvīda Brahmans differ in  
point of ritual, manners, and customs. Language which, if  
common to two people, at once would establish ties of artificial  
relationship between them, was altogether different and hence  
estranged the two peoples. Instead of assimilating and incor-  
porating themselves with the Dravida Brahmans, their Gauda  
instincts compelled them to hold aloof and become a distinct  
community, maintaining its social autonomy in spite of dis-  
advantages and inconveniences.

Grains and vegetables with the milk of cows and buffaloes  
Food. and its products constitute the primary articles  
of the food of the community. In Canara and  
in the places to the south of it cocoanut oil is largely employed  
in seasoning and frying, while, in the places to the north of  
Canara, ghee takes its place. Wheat, rice, Bengal gram, green  
and black beans, are turned into flour, which is made use of in  
the preparation of sweet meats. The Gauda Saraswata Brah-  
mans in Cochin and Travancore have attained great excellence  
in the preparation of a large variety of rich and palatable  
curries, while their northern brethren surpass them in the pre-  
paration of sweetmeats and similar eatables.

It may be here stated that the survival of some primitive  
Aryan practises in the matter of diet may be found to a small  
extent among the Gauda Saraswata Brahmans here and there.  
Such practices do not find favour with the large majority of  
the community, whose present views about proper diet and  
living make them look upon such practices as unorthodox.  
The members of the community, among whom such practices are

found, may in justification refer to the Salya parva of the Mahabharata in which the eponymous progenitor of the tribe, the first Saraswata, will be found to have been permitted by his mother the Goddess Saraswati to eat food which strict orthodoxy in these days will consider unhallowed. It may be confidently stated, however, that such practices are neither universal nor followed on public or ceremonial occasions and that generally they are looked down upon.

The Konkani Brahmins generally wear *mundus*, but on solemn religious or festive occasions they use *dhótis* and shawls and turbans.

The dress of women consists of a mere *saree* reaching to the ankles, but rarely of a *kanchuka* or a shawl over it. At the wedding ceremonies a small shawl is thrown over the shoulders of the bride.

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I am indebted to Mr. Seshagiri Prabhu, M. A., Lecturer, Rajamahendry College, for the account of the Konkani Brahmins.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

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### THE NON-INDIGENOUS CASTES.

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#### AMBATTAN.

The Ambattans are the Tamil barbers, some of whom have become, like the Cháliyans and Tarakans, half-Malayali in appearance and have adopted some of the customs of the Malabar Sudras.

Very probably the original occupation of Ambattans was the practice of surgery, to which were added later on, the professions of village barber and musician. This view is supported by the current tradition that the Ambattans are the descendants of the offspring of a Vaisya woman by a Brahman, to whom the medical profession was allotted as a means of livelihood.

There are two classes of Ambattans, namely, the Tamil Ambattans, and the Malayali Ambattans. The latter again form two endogamous groups, one of which follows the system of the inheritance in the male line and the other (Velakkathalavans) in the female line. Those that follow the former system consider themselves superior in status to those who follow the matriarchal form of inheritance. There is neither interdining nor intermarriage between the members of the two groups.

The girls of the Tamil and the Malayalam Ambattans, who belong to the patriarchal system of inheritance, are married both before and after puberty. The marriage ceremonies are performed in the same manner as those of other Tamil Sudras. Various rites are performed such as the planting of a post (*muhúrtakál*) decorated with mango leaves before the auspicious hour (*Muhúrtam*), worship of Vignésvara, the tonsure of the bride-groom

*pāda-pūja* (washing the feet of the bride-groom) by his brother-in-law on entering the gate of the bride's house, preparation of the sacred fire (*hóman*) by a Brahman priest, waving of certain things (a lighted lamp, a vessel of water, a vessel of rice and paddy) round the face of the conjugal pair to counteract the potency of the evil-eye, *tali*-tying by the bride-groom, *dáradat-tam* (giving away the bride), going round the fire. The proceedings conclude with pot-searching to find out whether the married couple will beget a son or a daughter<sup>1</sup>. Then the guests assembled are treated to a feast. The marriage festivities last for four days, and on the morning of the fourth day, the bridal pair, after bathing and worshipping the local deity return to the bride's house in procession, where the guests assembled are treated to a grand feast. After this, there is a general contribution of a few annas each (*poli*) from those present to meet the expenses of the ceremony. The marriage is then over, and on the fifth day the bridegroom returns home with the bride and her party, who are sumptuously entertained. A man can marry two or more women, but never can a woman mate with more than one man. Widow remarriage is however in vogue among them.

The ceremonies connected with pregnancy and child birth and all post-natal ceremonies are similar to those which prevail among other Tamil Sudras.

The Ambattans worship the ordinary Hindu divinities, but they are also animists to some extent, for they adore such demoniacal Gods, as Mádan, Yakshi, Gandarvan, and are worshippers of ancestral spirits.

The dead bodies of the Ambattans are generally burned, but those who have died as the result of accident or contagious diseases, are buried. The son is the chief mourner. He must, daily after bathing, make rice offerings to the spirits of the departed. The pollution lasts for fifteen days, and on the morning of the sixteenth, the agnates bathe and, after taking a little of the sanctified water brought by a Brahman priest, become free from pollution. Annual memorial ceremonies (*Srádha*) are also performed by them.

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1. Vide marriage customs of the Kaikolans and Devangas.

They faithfully follow their traditional occupation of shaving, and may be seen going early in the morning to their employers' houses. Their women act as mid-wives. Some are physicians as well, while a few of them are musicians also.

Ambattans, like Velakkathalavans, are one of the most important of village servants. They lead a busy life and their services are in requisition on all occasions of marriages, feasts and funerals. As has been seen, they combine in themselves the three useful avocations of shaver, surgeon, and musician.

Ambattans numbered 1,101 at the last census, 511 being males, and 590 females, but these figures include both the Tamil and Malayali Ambattans.

#### ANDI.

The Andis are a class of Tamil beggars who profess the *Sivite* faith. They are found in some of the villages of the Chittur Taluk begging from door to door and beating a small gong with a stick. The Andis differ from most other castes in that a person of any caste may join their community. Some of them officiate as priests in village temples, especially when large sacrifices of goats, buffaloes, and pigs are made.

It is recorded that<sup>1</sup> South Indian beggars are divided into two classes, *Panjathāndi* and *Paramparayāndi*. The former are famine-made beggars, and the latter are beggars from generation to generation. The former, as a common saying goes, would rob from the person of a child, if an opportunity occurs, while the latter would jump into a well and pick up a child which has fallen into it by an accident, and make it over to its parents.

Andi is, in fact, almost a generic name. All Andis are not beggars however; some are bricklayers, others are cultivators, and yet others are occupied in temples. They employ Brahman priests at their ceremonies, but all of them eat meat and drink alcohol. The Andis are inferior to Pandārams, but the two terms are often indiscriminately applied to the same class of people. The former, however, draw recruits from all classes of Sudras. Andis numbered 331 at the last census, 115 being males, and 216 females.

1. C. Hayavandana Rao, *Tales of Komati Wit and Wisdom*,

## CHAKKAN.

The Chakkans are the Tamil oil-pressers and dealers in oil found in the Trichur town and the Chittur Taluk of the State. They call themselves Vaisyas, and their holy book is called Vaisyapurānam.

The word "Chakkan" means one who works in *Chakku* or an oil-mill; and they call themselves Vaniyans which signifies trade, *i. e.*, trade in oil as well as in its manufacture, which is the usual occupation of the caste.

Marriage between members of the same *gotras* is never allowed; but a young man can claim the hand of the daughter of his maternal uncle or parental aunt. Among the Chakkans, girls are married both before and after they reach the age of puberty. Their marriage ceremonies are similar to those prevailing in other Tamil castes. The bride's price was formerly twenty-one rupees, but is now thirty-one. The wedding may be celebrated in the bride's house or in that of the bride-groom. In the former case, all expenses connected with the wedding have to be defrayed by the bride-groom, while in the latter case the bride's price alone is paid at the time of settlement. The marriage ceremony begins with the erection of a pandal at the auspicious hour on a day previous to that fixed for the wedding. In a conspicuous place therein are placed two earthen vessels, one containing water, and the other rice and dholl, and by the side of them, are also seven small ones for various seeds. A short time before the auspicious hour for the tali-tying, a Brahman priest prepares the sacred fire or *homam*. The bride's mother, dressed in one of the cloths presented by the bride-groom, goes to a tank or well with a vessel full of water decorated with flowers, and with a cocoanut at its mouth, performs what is called *Gouri pūja*, and returns home to place herself along with the others in the pandal. The other formalities, namely, tying a piece of thread round the wrists of the bride and the bride-groom, the going of the bride-groom to the temple to adore the deity, his return to the bride's house in procession, the waving of a lighted lamp and a vessel containing water round the heads of both to avoid the potency of the evil-eye, the *tali*-tying by the bride-groom after offerings to Gouri, the *dāradattam* (giving of water), the clasping of the bride's hand, the treading on a mortar, the

looking at the Pole Star (*Ursamajor*), the going round the fire, and the due obeisance by both to the guests assembled, are all gone through<sup>1</sup> as amongst the Brahmans. The first day's ceremonies are then all over, and the castemen assembled are treated to a feast. There is nothing of importance on the second and third days. On the morning of the fourth day, the bridal pair worships the local deity after a bath, and return home. The bride-groom's party and others among the castemen are treated to a grand feast. On the evening of the same day the conjugal pair go in procession round the streets, and after their return home, an entertainment is given to the guests, each of whom contributes a few annas or even a rupee or two for defraying the expenses incurred for the wedding. The guests then disperse, and the bride-groom returns to his house with the bride, and her parents are all sumptuously entertained. In the case of adult marriage, consummation takes place on a subsequent auspicious night.

Among the Chakkans polygamy [is allowed, but polyandry and widow marriage are unknown. All ante and post-natal ceremonies are the same as those prevailing in other Tamil castes.

The Chakkans follow inheritance in the male line. They have their caste assemblies to enquire into all social disputes and settle them.

They worship Siva and Vishnu with equal reverence. They are animists to some extent, and adore Pèchi, Mari Amman, Oodarakaruppan, Chudala Karuppan, and the spirits of their ancestors. The Pandavites are also held in veneration. Among these people fire-walking is in vogue. On the morning previous to the day of ceremony a *pūja* is offered to *Pāñchali* by a Brahman priest, when one of the castemen becoming a *Velichapad* and known among them as Véerabhadran points out the spot in front of the temple where the fire-walking is to take place; and then going in procession round the streets returns to the temple. A kind of pit 36 feet long, 18 feet broad, two or three feet deep, is dug and filled in with six or seven cart-loads of fuel, which are burned and reduced to red hot glowing embers. In the evening also are offered similar *pūjas* to the deity, and the idols which are to be

1. Vide Marriage ceremonies of the Brahmans

afterwards taken in procession are placed on appropriate seats in the quadrangular edifice (*nāḷambalam*) of the temple, amidst the congregation of the caste-men, and music, either vocal or instrumental, is played. This lasts for two or three hours, after which there is a procession through the streets with the idols placed in two richly decorated cars. Amidst a display of fireworks, the playing of musical instruments and the beating of drums the procession moves on; and after returning to the temple the two cars are placed in front of the pit in which the fuel has now subsided into glowing red-hot embers.

The castemen and others, who have been under a vow, purify themselves along with their priest by a bath in the nearest tank or river and go to the pit. The priest first walks on the glowing charcoal, and is at once followed by the castemen, who are in a state of fervent piety. Formerly they used to walk over it three times but they now do it only once.

The dead bodies of young men and women are buried, while those of the grown-up members are burned. The son is the chief mourner, and the pollution lasts for ten days. On the eleventh day the members of the family are purified by a bath and take a dose of sanctified water (*punyḍham*) given by a Brahman priest. On the anniversary of death, a kind of memorial service (*Srādhā*) is performed for the spirit of the departed.

The Chakkāns follow the traditional occupation of the caste, namely, oil-pressing, and oil selling. The oils they deal in are gingelly (*sisamum*), coconut, Illuppa (*bassia longifolia*) and ground-nut (*calophyllum inophyllum*). According to the *sāstras*, the crushing of gingelly seeds and the sale of gingelly oil are sinful acts, and no one, who does not belong to this class, will either press or sell.

#### DEVANGA.

The Devangas are a caste of weavers speaking Telugu or Canarese, and are found in the Chittur and Talappilli Taluks of the State. They are also called *Jadaru* or Jada' (great men). Dendra, Devara, Dera, Seniyan, and Sedan. At Coimbatore in the Tamil country, they are called *Settukāran* (economical people).

The following legend is narrated concerning the origin of this caste. Brahma, having created Manu, told him to weave



clothes for Devas and men, whereupon Manu did so for some years, and through his piety and virtuous life reached heaven. There being no one left to weave for them, the Devas and men had to wear garments of leaves. Vexed at this, they prayed to Brahma that he would rescue them from their plight, and he took them to Siva who at once created a lustrous spirit and called him Dévalan. Struck with the brilliancy of this spirit, all fled in confusion excepting Pârvati, who remained with Siva. Siva told her that Devalan was created to weave clothes to cover the bodies of Devas and men, whose descendants are in consequence Devangas (*Deva-anga*—limb of Gods). Dévalan was advised to obtain thread from the lotus stalks springing from the navel of Vishnu, and he secured it after a severe penance, but on his way back he met a Rākshasa, Vajradantan by name, who was doing penance at a hermitage disguised as a Sanyasi. Deceived by his appearance, Dévalan paid homage to him and determined to spend the night at the hermitage; but towards the close of the day the *Rishi* and his followers threw off their disguise and appeared in their true colour as Asuras. Dévalan sought the assistance of Vishnu, and a *Chakra* was given to him with which he attempted to overthrow the increasing number of Asuras. He then invoked the assistance of Chandanâyaki or Chandeswari<sup>1</sup>, who came riding on a lion and drove off the Asuras. The mighty Asuras who met their death were Vajradanta (diamond toothed), Chitra-sēnan (leader of armies), and Jayadrathan (owner of a victory-securing car). The blood of these three was coloured respectively yellow, red, white, and green, and Devalan dyed his threads by dipping them in the blood.

There are two sub-divisions among the Devangas or Chêdâns, the members of one of which speak  
 Sub-divisions.      Canarese and those of the other Telugu, and

between them there is neither intermarriage nor interdining.

Marriage is endogamous, and the Devanga girls of both  
 Marriage Customs.      the sections are married both before and after they reach puberty. Further, some among them eat flesh and a girl who belongs to a flesh eating family must abstain from meat, and may not touch any vessel or food in her husband's family till she has reached puberty. Before settling the marriage of a girl the village Goddess Chandeswari

<sup>1</sup>, Devanga Puranam.

is consulted and the omens are watched. A lizard chirping on the right is a good omen and on the left bad. Sometimes red and white flowers, wrapped in green leaves, are thrown in front of the idol and the omen is considered good or bad according to the flower which a boy or a girl picks up. Very often the horoscopes of the young man and the girl are examined, and if they are found to agree they are considered eligible for marriage. The marriage ceremony begins with the planting of a bamboo post in the pandal erected in front of the house after propitiating the God Ganapathi. A small branch of the *pāla* or milk tree (*Mimusops Hexandra*) is tied to the bamboo post and a small yellow piece of cloth containing pepper and grains is rolled and tied round it. The castemen assembled there are given betel leaves and arecanuts. This takes place on an auspicious day previous to that fixed for the wedding.

On the morning of the wedding day, a few seats made of earth brought from a neighbouring ant-hill are prepared in the pandal, and on these are placed two large pots containing rice and dhol and eight small ones with grains which sprout after being daily moistened with water. A lighted lamp, a vessel of paddy, rice, and a pail full of water are also placed there. A Brahman priest prepares the *Homam* (sacred fire.)

In the early morning the bridegroom gets himself shaved, bathes, and dresses himself like a Brahman bridegroom with a long yellow cloth (*sóman*) and a small one over his shoulders and wears the *Kankanam*. With his party, he goes in procession to the local temple to worship the deity and then arrives at the bride's house where, at the gate, his feet are washed by her brother. He is then conducted to the seat assigned to him. Flat metallic dishes containing cocoanuts, plantains, betel leaves, arecanuts, pepper, and other grains, garlic, the wedding dress and *tāli* are brought by the women of his house and placed before him. The bride who is also neatly dressed and decked in her best is conducted to the booth and seated by the side of the bridegroom. The sisters of both wave round their faces a lighted lamp, a vessel of paddy and rice, and a vessel of water to counteract the potency of the evil-eye. The bride then stands up and her father pours water in her palm, and this is allowed to pass into the palm of the bridegroom's father who receives and drinks it. At this time, the bride's father says that he parts with his daughter in marriage to the intended

young man, and the bridegroom's father answers that he accepts her as the wife of his son. After this, the priest gives the *tali* to the bridegroom to be tied round the bride's neck, and the small fingers of the right hands of the contracting parties are brought in contact with each other. They then go round the sacred fire, and seating themselves on a mat, are served with some milk and slices of plantain fruits. The conjugal pair then prostrate themselves before their parents and the other elders assembled there for their blessing. The proceedings conclude with pot-searching. A pap-bowl and ring are put into a pot, and if the bride picks out the bowl, it is believed that her first born will be a girl and if the bridegroom gets hold of the ring, it will be a boy. The guests who attend the ceremony are treated to a feast. On the fifth day a square design is made on the floor with coloured rice. Between the contracting couple and the square a row of lights is placed. Four pots are set, one at each corner of the square, and eight pots arranged along each side thereof. On the square itself two pots representing Siva and Uma are placed with a row of small pots near them. A thread is wound nine times round the pots representing the God and Goddess and tied above to the pandal. After the pots have been worshipped, the thread is cut and worn with the sacred thread for three months. This ceremony is called *Nagavali*. A puja to the posts of the pandal is also made with the offerings of rice and dhol preserved in the pots already mentioned. Widow remarriage is freely allowed. A woman committing adultery with a member of another caste is severely flogged and outcasted.

When a girl reaches puberty, a twig of *Alangium Lamarcki* is placed in the menstrual hut to keep off devils. The pollution lasts for 15 days, and on the morning of the sixteenth she becomes free from it by a bath in a tank or river.

The Devangas follow inheritance in the male line. They have their caste government consisting of the head-man, called *Chettiyar*, and other elderly members of the community who settle all the disputes and levy fines from those who have transgressed the rules of the caste. In rare cases the delinquents are outcasted.

The majority of the Dévāngas are Sivites, and wear the *Lingam*. They do not wash the stone *Lingam* in which the feet of *Jangams* have been washed. They are particular in always wearing the *Lingam*, for when they are at work, they have to touch all kinds of people. They are Lingayats and have special reverence for Basavana, the sacred bull, and the burying of the Brahmini bull is regarded by them as a sacred and meritorious act<sup>1</sup>. Other castes do not regard it as such, though they often set free sacred cows and calves. They have at Kumbhakonam in Tanjore their *guru*, who once in several years sends his agents to receive a small contribution, and when he comes in person, he gives *Upadésa* (advice). Some have given up the *Linga* and become Vaishnavites. Their chief Goddess is Chandeswari, a form of Kali or Durga, who is worshipped at a festival annually by the entire community.

The dead are generally buried in a sitting posture. Before the grave is filled in, a string is tied to the *Kudimi* (hair knot) of the corpse, and by its means the head is brought near the surface. Over it a *Lingam* is set up and worshipped daily throughout the death ceremonies.

The Devangas have been for a long time following the hereditary occupation of weaving *sómans* (a kind of cloth with silk or coloured borders, ten cubits in length), and *Shelai* (a piece of cloth 18 cubits in length coloured for women). "They use counts up to hundred's and even higher when there is a demand for the same. They make fine cloths (60 to 100 counts generally) with lace or coloured border and 24 to 50 inches wide. Their finished product *Pávu-mundu* is the fashionable attire of the Malayalis and consequently there is a great demand for it. Their castemen in other villages also make similar cloths, but they seldom use counts higher than 60 for want of a ready sale. Their finished products are sold either locally to merchants coming from other parts or they themselves take them to well-to-do families in the State. The Chédars are comparatively a thriving class of weavers who have, of late, taken to financing their industry. They supply the poor weavers with yarn and also make small advances for their maintenance whenever required and they recoupe themselves by buying the finished product at a fair valuation

1. Castes and Tribes of Southern India, Vol. II, p. 161.

previously agreed upon. This is practically a system of small factories with men employed on piece wages. The poorest among them are in some cases also employed as journey-men weavers to work the looms of richer weavers. Hence the Chedars, as a class, are able to earn double the wages of Chaliyans and Kaikolans. Almost all the fine cloths with lace or coloured border required for local consumption used to be imported from Tinnevely; but for the last 20 or 25 years the leading families in Cochin began one by one to buy the produce of Kuttampilli and Chittur and especially the former. This preference has given a great impetus to the local industry, and it has reached such a pitch that at the present moment Tinnevely cloths have all but disappeared from the Cochin market.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the Devangas are short of stature, light-skinned, with sharp cut features, light brown iris, and delicate tapering fingers. They numbered at the last Census 2,349, (1,176 males and 1,173 females).

Conclusion.

#### KAIKOLAN.

The Kaikolans are a caste of weavers found in the Chittur and Talapilli Taluks of the State, who are immigrants from the Tamil Districts. The word Kaikolan is the Tamil equivalent of the Sanskrit *Virabāhu*, a mythological hero from whom both the *Kaikolans* and a section of the *Paraiyans* claim descent. The Kaikolans are also called *Senkundar* (red men armed with dagger) in connection with the following legend. "The people of the earth, being harassed by certain demons, applied to Siva for help. Siva was enraged against the giants and sent forth six sparks of fire from his eyes. His wife, Parvati, was frightened and retired to her chamber and, in so doing, dropped nine beads from her anklets. Siva converted the beads into as many females, to each of whom was born a hero with full grown moustaches and a dagger. These nine heroes with Subramanya at their head marched in command of a large force and destroyed the demons. The Kaikolans or *Senkundar* are said to be the descendants of *Virabāhu*, one of these heroes. After killing the demons, the warriors were told by Siva that they should become musicians and adopt a profession

which would not involve the destruction or injury of any living creature, and weaving being such a profession, they were trained in it<sup>1</sup>." According to another version, Siva told Parvati that the world would be enveloped in darkness if he should close his eyes. Impelled by curiosity, Pàrvati closed her husband's eyes with her hands. Being terrified by the darkness, she ran to her chamber and on the way thither, nine precious stones fell from her anklets and turned into nine fair maidens, with whom Siva became enamoured and embraced them. Seeing later on that they were pregnant, Parvati uttered a curse that they should not bring forth the children formed in their wombs. One Padmasura was troubling the people in this world and on their praying to Siva to help them, he asked Subramanya to kill the Asura. Parvati requested Siva not to send Subramanya by himself, whereupon he suggested the withdrawal of her curse. Accordingly the damsels gave birth to nine heroes, who carrying red daggers and headed by Subramanya went in search of the Asura and killed him. The word *Kaikol* is said to refer to the *Ratna-Vail* or precious dagger carried by Subramanya. The Kaikolans on the *Soora Samharam* day during the festival of Subramanya dress themselves up to represent the nine warriors and join in the procession.

The name Kaikolan is further derived from *Kai* (hand) and *Kol* (shuttle). The Kaikolans consider the different parts of the loom to represent various *dévatās*<sup>2</sup> and *Rishis*. The thread is said to have been originally obtained from the lotus stalk rising from Vishnu's navel. Several Devas formed the threads which make the warp. Nárada became the woof; and *Vedamuni* the treadle. Brahma transformed himself into the plank (*padamaram*) and Adi-Sesha, the main rope.

The Kaikolans of the Chittur Taluk really form one caste, but there are two sections among them, the members of one of which are somewhat like the Nayars in appearance, while those of the other are like the Tamil Sudras. The former who speak corrupt Tamil which consists largely of Malayalam words are said to belong to the thirty-two families that once immigrated from Conjeevaram, while the latter, who speak pure Tamil, have no such tradition about their settlement in this Taluk.

1. Madras Census Report 1891.

2. Deities.

Among the members of the Nayar-like section there is no inter-marriage between the members who are descended from the same original families. This appears to be similar to the restrictions among the Nayars. In both sections a young man may marry the daughter of his maternal uncle or parental aunt.

The girls of the Kaikolans are married both before and after puberty. Marriage customs of both the sub-divisions are mostly similar, as will be seen from the following description, where the variations in each case are noted. The parents of a young man who has arrived at the marriageable age select a suitable girl after the due examination and agreement of their horoscopes. If the girl's parents make no objection to the proposed match, a convenient day is selected, when the parents of both together with their relations and friends meet in the house of the girl to settle the conditions and select the auspicious day (*muhúrtam*) on which the wedding is to take place. On the day previous to the wedding, they perform the ceremony of *Ashtamangalyam*, for which the castemen are invited, and in their presence, the girl's father makes the solemn promise of giving his daughter to the intended young man. There is then a liberal distribution of *pan supari* to all those present. This custom is in vogue only among the members of the Nayar-like section. On the morning of the wedding day a bamboo post, which is decorated with the leaves of mango and pipal trees and with *Darbha* grass, and to which a *puja* is performed by a Brahman priest, is fixed in the marriage booth at an auspicious hour. The Tamil Kaikolans tie round it a piece of yellow cloth containing various grains and pulses. A few women of the house bring some earth from a neighbouring ant-hill, with a small portion of which the ground around the post is raised, and with what then remains, beds are prepared for two pots to rest on. These pots which contain water coloured yellow and 8 or 9 small vessels of mud with some grains and pulses in each, are placed in a conspicuous part of the marriage pandal, and to this a *puja* is performed by a Brahman priest, who, after this, prepares the sacred fire (*hónam*). On the morning of the same day the bridegroom gets his face shaved for the first time, bathes and, being neatly dressed and adorned in his best, goes in procession with his parents, relations and friends to the temple to worship the

deity (Ganapathi) and then arrives at the bride's house. As he enters the gate, the bride's brother washes his feet and conducts him to a conspicuous seat in the pandal. Metal trays containing coconuts, plantain fruits, betel leaves, arecanuts salt, tamarind, pepper, wedding dress, and the *tali* or marriage badge are carried along with him by the women of his house and placed in the pandal. Then the maternal uncle conducts the bride, who is neatly and beautifully dressed, to the pandal and seats her close to the bridegroom. In another part of the pandal rice is boiled in two earthen vessels by the sisters of the bride and bridegroom. This boiled rice is placed on two plantain leaves to be offered to the image of Ganapathi, who is worshipped by both of them. The above custom is in vogue only among the Tamil Kaikolans. A small thread (*Kankanam*) coloured yellow with turmeric is tied round the wrist of each. The sisters of the conjugal pair take a lamp, a vessel of water and a vessel of rice and paddy, and raising them to the level of their heads, describe a specified number of circles with them in order that they may counteract the influence of the evil-eye. The bride stands facing her father-in-law, and her father then pours water into the bride's palm, and she pours it into that of the bridegroom's father who drinks it. As the father pours the water, he says to the bridegroom's father that he offers his daughter to the selected bridegroom, his son, and the latter answers that he accepts her as his son's wife. This done, the marriage badge is blessed and handed over by the priest to the bridegroom, who ties it round the bride's neck. Their little fingers are then brought in contact with each other, and they go round the fire with pious reverence. They are then seated on mats and given some milk and slices of plantain fruits. A piece of gold and silver and some rice are put into a pot and are well stirred, and the married couple are directed to pick out of it; and as the silver or the gold piece is first picked out, so they will have a son or a daughter born to them. The marriage ceremony for the first day is over, and the guests are treated to a feast. There is nothing further of importance except on the fourth day, when the married couple are seated apart with one end of the bridegroom's cloth touching the bride, and yellow water kept in pots is poured on their heads. Those present are also bathed in the water, and the yellow strings



round the wrists of bride and bridegroom are removed. The pots and other things in the pandal are removed to the neighbouring tank or river, where they are deposited. The marriage couple bathe and return home, and worship the deity in the local temple. The castemen are treated to a grand feast. After this the bridegroom and the bride are seated side by side, and in front of each is placed a metal dish in which are put a few annas, or a rupee or two by the relatives and castemen of each according to their means; and these collections go to the bride and the bridegroom to meet the expenses already incurred by them. Towards the evening the bridegroom returns home in procession along with his bride and her party, where they are all treated to a grand supper. Next morning the married couple are invited to the house of the bride, where the bridegroom and his parents are sumptuously entertained. With a similar feast in the house of the latter to the bride's party, the marriage is brought to a close. The consummation takes place on another auspicious night.

Polygamy is allowed, but polyandry and widow re-marriage are strictly prohibited. All anti-natal and post-natal rites are similar to those in vogue among other Hindu castemen.

The Kaikolans follow inheritance in the male line.

Inheritance.

They have their caste assemblies consisting of the elder members of the caste, who meet on

occasions concerning the welfare of the caste.

They are Sivites in religion and worship Siva, Parvati or

Religion.

Kamakshi Amman, Ganapathi and Subramanya to whom *pujas* are regularly offered.

They also propitiate the local Bhagavati once a year, generally in the month of June, with offerings of sheep, fowl, etc. They are also the worshippers of Sakti and Muni.

The dead bodies of Kaikolans are burned, but those who

Funeral ceremonies.

have died of small-pox, cholera and plague are generally buried. The chief mourner is the

son, and the pollution lasts for ten days. The agnates bathe on the eleventh day and become free from pollution by taking a dose of *Punyaham* (sanctified water). On the 12th day, the chief mourner offers the funeral oblations to the spirit of the departed and also treats the castemen to a feast.

“Like the Devangas, the Kaikolans are hereditary cotton weavers, who use the country pit looms; not one of them employs looms with fly-shuttle arrangements. The warp is prepared generally by women and children, and in the matter of sizing which requires the service of more than one individual, the weavers in the same neighbourhood assist each other. The Kaikolans weave only coarse cloths and do not use counts beyond twenty. Their looms are narrow and cloths wider than thirty inches are seldom turned out. The coarse cloths made by them find a ready sale in the local markets as they are much in demand among the poor classes. The Kaikolans are, with half a dozen exceptions, poor, and have no means of purchasing the yarn required for their looms. They get advance from the dealers and undertake to sell their finished products to the latter at a pre-arranged rate. Their earnings are so slender owing to this and to competition that a few days' illness of the working member of a family reduces it to starvation. A man, a woman, and a boy can, between them, earn only four to six annas a day, which is less than the wages of common agricultural labourers. Notwithstanding their rooted conservatism, therefore, some of them have altogether abandoned the industry and taken to agriculture, while more of them are trying to combine it with other occupations, such as vending groceries, husking paddy, etc.”

The male members of one section are like the Nayars wearing *Mundus* and small upper garments. They grow an oval patch of hair which is tied into a knot on the top of the head. Their women wear an ordinary red or white loin cloth which is about six yards in length and is folded twice. The hair on the head is parted and tied into a knot behind. The Tamil Kaikolans are like the Tamil Sudras. The former, like the Chilians and Tarakans, are half Nayar-like to serve their own ends, while the latter still stick to their old habits.

They numbered at the last Census 4,121, (2,011 males and 2,110 females).

#### KAKKALANS.

The Kakkalans are a vagrant tribe found all over the State and are identical with the Kákka-kuravans. There are among

them two endogamous divisions called *Kāvitiyan* and *Māni-parayan*, and these are known as Meluthon and Cháttaparayan in the Chittur and Talapilli Taluks of the State. The Kavitiyans are further divided into Kollam (Quilon) *Kāvitiyan*, Malayalam-Kavitiyan, and Pandi-Kavitiyans, the last being old immigrants from the Pandiyan country.

The Kákkálans have a legend concerning their origin to the effect that Siva was once going about begging as a Kápala-Dhárin and arrived at a Brahman street, from which the inhabitants drove him away. The offended God reduced the village to ashes, and the guilty villagers begged his pardon, but were reduced to the position of the Kákkálans, and made to earn their livelihood by begging.

Though, in the presence of other castemen, the Kákkálans speak Malayalam, they have a peculiar language of their own, which is not easily understood by others.

The Kákkálans of Trichur generally intermarry with those in Palghat and other places but not with those beyond Irinjalakuda. A young man may marry the daughter of his maternal uncle or the daughter of his paternal aunt.

*Marriage customs.*

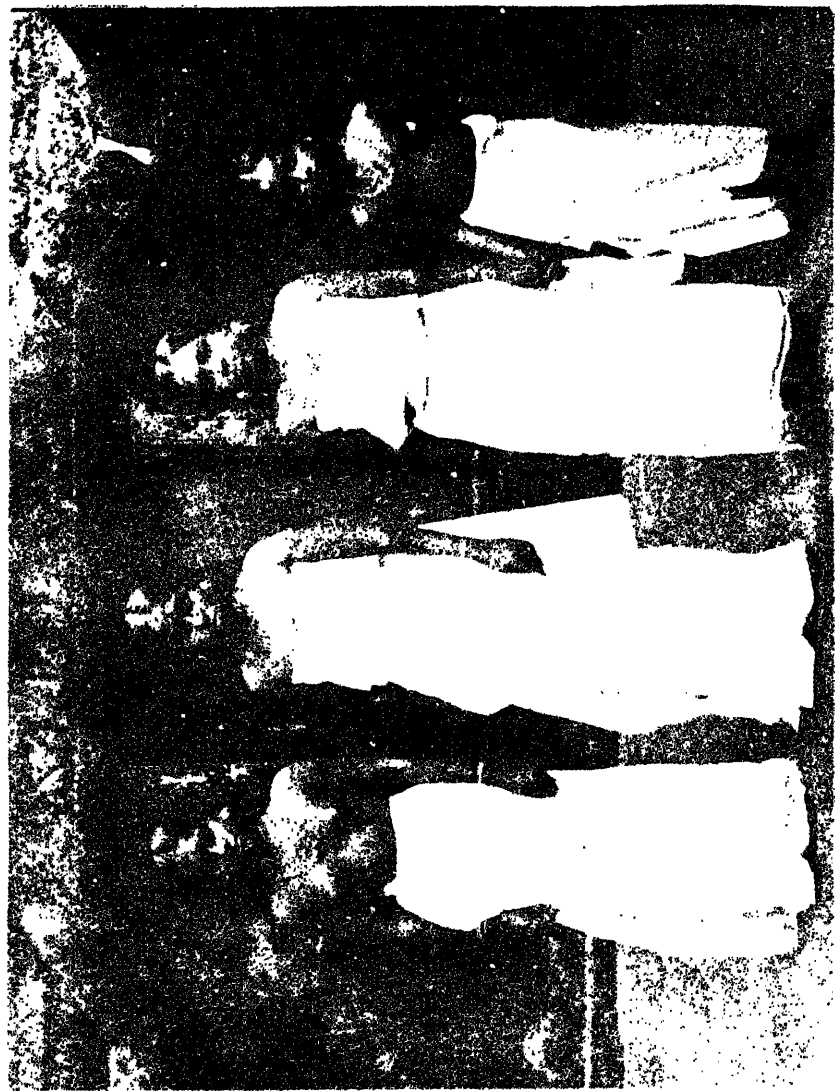
When a young man is to be married, his father and maternal uncle go in search of a suitable girl and when she is selected, they negotiate with her father and maternal uncle. If the latter agree, the friends and relations on both sides meet together in the house of the girl, when they formally talk over the matter and settle the bride's price, which varies from 120 to 360 *fanams*, a fanam being equal to four annas and seven pies. The castemen assembled in the bride's house are then entertained at the expense of the bridegroom. A day is also fixed for the celebration of the marriage, and on that day the bridegroom's party assemble at the house of the bride, and his sister dresses the bride with the wedding costumes brought by her; after which the *táli* is tied round the girl's neck at an auspicious hour, generally at sunrise. The bridegroom's party are then entertained, after which either the bridegroom's *Enangan* or his uncle says that they purchase the girl at a cost of so many fanams and that they give so much of it then with a promise to give the balance on demand thereafter. The girl's uncle and father hand over



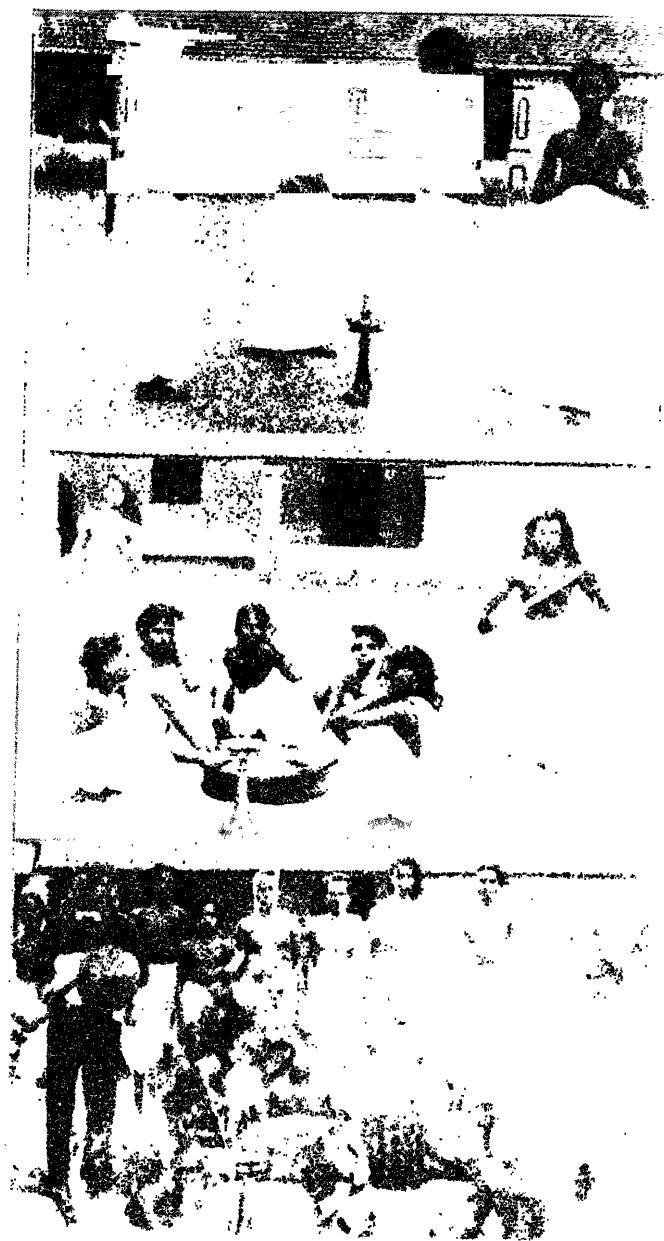
TWO PUSHPAKANS AND TWO PUSHPINIS.



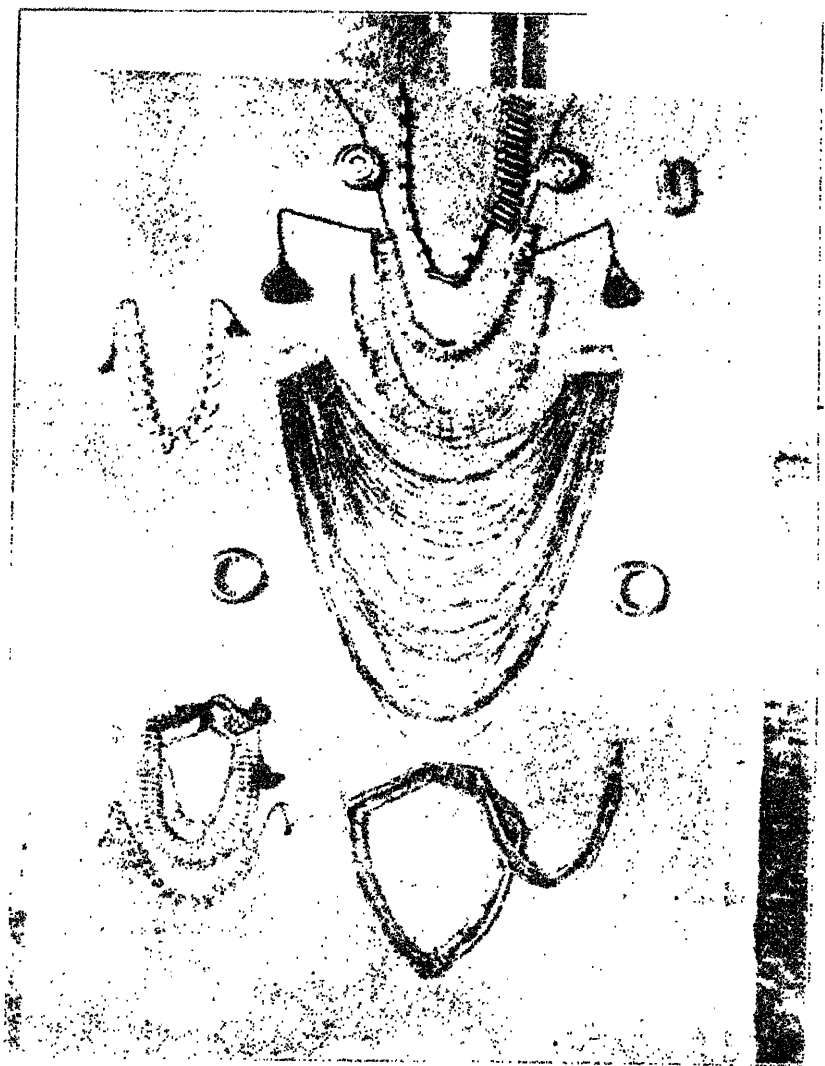
A THIVYADI NUMBIYAR AND HIS DRUMMER.



KSHATRIYA WOMEN



SANKA KALI.

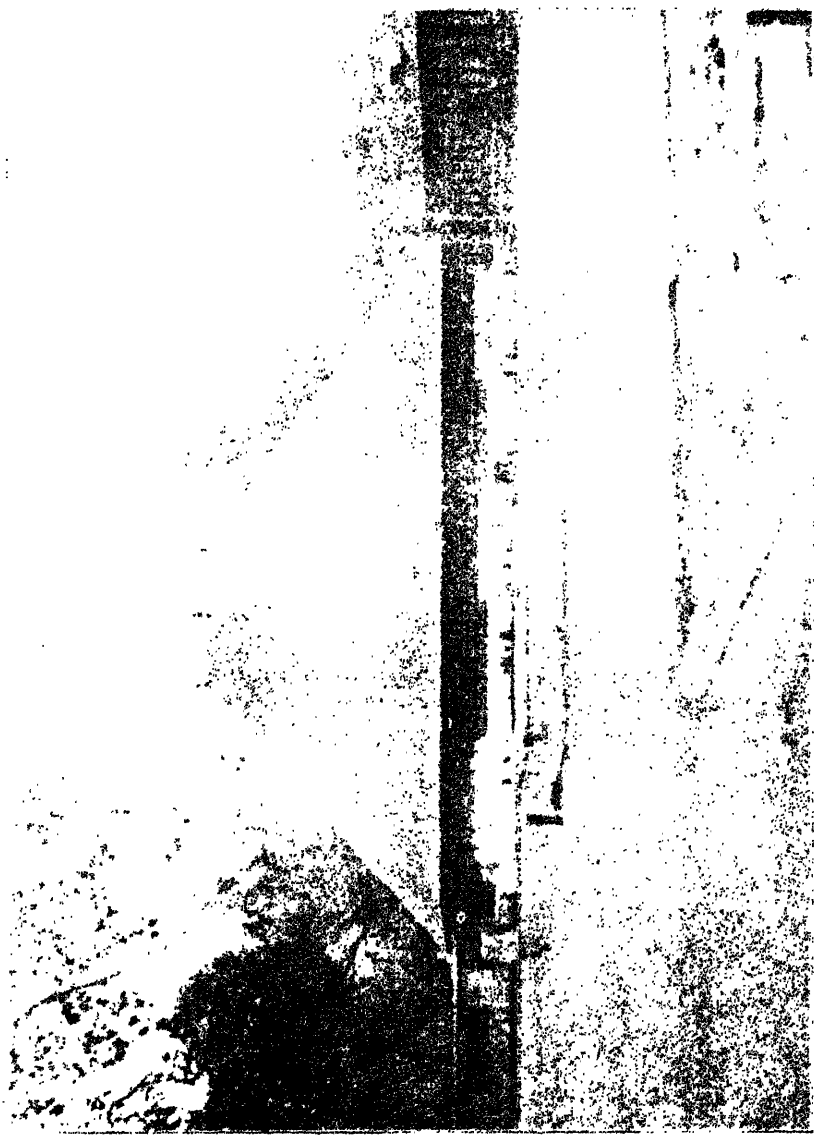


. OLD ORNAMENTS OF NAYAR LADIES.





A GROUP OF KADUPPATTANS.



KUTTAMB LAM.



CHAKKIYAR, NANGIYAR, AND NUMBIYAR WITH THE AUDIENCE AFTER THE PERFORMANCE.

the bride on receipt of the sum and consent to receive the balance as promised.

In some cases if ready-money or a portion of it is not paid, a document is received instead before the girl is handed over. As soon as this is done, either on the same day or on the next, the bride is taken to the house of the bridegroom, where the bride's party are sumptuously entertained. The binding portion of the ceremony consists in their eating together from the same vessel. In some places the married couple are seated side by side, and the elderly women of the family give them some milk and slices of plantain fruits which is called *Mādhuram Kotukkal* or giving of sweets. Then the bride and the bridegroom go to the house of the former, where they stay for a few days.

In cases where the bride's price or a portion of it is not paid as promised, the amount received is returned, and the woman is sold to another member of the caste. Any child born of the earlier union remains with its father. If this be a girl, half the bride's price goes to the mother at her marriage.

In the Talapilli and Chittur Taluks, the first marriage must be celebrated on a Sunday, and the festivities last from Saturday to Monday. Subsequent marriages may be celebrated on a Thursday. On the night of the day before the wedding, a brother or other near relation of the bridegroom places the *Sambandham* alliance by bringing a *Fanam* (coin) worth of material for chewing, and cooked rice to the marriage pandal (*booth*). Fruits and other things are flung at him by the bride's people. On the following day the bridegroom arrives at the pandal, and after raising the *tali* (marriage badge) three times towards Heaven and invoking a blessing from on-high, ties it round the bride's neck.

When a girl comes of age, she is lodged in a separate room and three or four other girls are kept with her during the days of her pollution. The girl is purified by a bath either on the seventh or the eleventh day, when the castemen in the neighbourhood are treated to a feast. During the menses the girl is given a little oil mixed with turmeric and the white of egg, and is fed with rice during these days. If the girl is believed to be under demoniacal influence,

Puberty-customs.

a Pánan is sent for, who, by his exorcism sets her free from such attacks.

The Kákkalans are conspicuously polygamous, and some have as many as six or seven wives who support themselves by their professional engagements (palmistry) and begging for alms. Among them, generally speaking, the women support their husbands. A woman, who becomes a widow, is at liberty to marry her brother-in-law, who must be her senior in age. In the event of her intention to marry another, the bride's price must be returned to her deceased husband's family.

Soon after delivery both the mother and the baby are bathed. The woman is fed with rice-gruel and with cocoanut shavings and afterwards with boiled rice. On the fourth day she is given a dose of a mixture of sugar and dried ginger, and this is continued for the next three days, and afterwards with other similar medicines. The expenses connected with it are defrayed by her husband.

Among the Kakkalans inheritance is from father to son. A childless widow is a copartner with the brothers of the deceased. They have also the rudiments of caste government.

They profess the low form of Hinduism. Their chief deity is Bhagavati, whom they worship and to whom offerings of sheep, fowls, etc., are made in Karkitagom (July-August) and Thulam (October-November). Sometimes their Gods are located underneath a tree in their own compound where a floor is raised and a shed put up on the auspicious days in the year, and where offerings are made. They worship the spirits of the departed, and to them offerings are made on certain auspicious nights. They also worship some demoniacal Gods, namely, Mundiyan, Chàttan, Kantakaranan and Kappiri. When their dyes become spoiled, when they meet with snakes in the forests, or when they go for grass, they worship Mallan, their sylvan deity, and offerings are made to him with the help of a Vèlan. They worship the rising Sun, to which boiled rice is offered on Sundays. They have no temples of their own but stand at some distance from the Hindu temples and worship the Gods therein. Though leading a wandering life, they try to be at home for the Malabar New Year, on which occasion they wear new cloths and hold a feast. They do not observe the national *Onam* and *Vishu* festivals however. They

Delivery customs.

Religion.

also worship in Christian churches and light a candle in honour of the divinity.

The dead bodies are generally buried. The son is the chief mourner. Pollution lasts for fifteen days. The *Enangan* performs the priestly functions.

The Kakkálans make excellent mats from grass (Cynoporus  
Corymborus) which they generally obtain  
Occupation. from the neighbourhood of marshy places in the forest, and split it into four, seven, or eight fibres and remove the pith. These fibres are then dried in the sun and after being well-soaked in water and dried become white. They prepare several vegetable dyes in large earthen pots, in which they arrange the piles of grass fibres over which they sprinkle the dying powder and again pile up the grass and boil the vessels consecutively for three days, alternately drying and placing the bundles of grass fibres in the various vegetable dyes. Red dyes are prepared from Chappangam (*Cæsalpínia sappan*) and the dry leaves of *kasa*, both of which are powdered after drying. The yellow colour is obtained by dipping the red fibres in water in which powdered turmeric has been dissolved. Black dyes are prepared either by placing the fibres in mud or in a vessel containing a liquid mixture of gall-nut and ferrous sulphate. The grass thus dyed is woven into fine mats of various dimensions, and patterns in looms similar to the ordinary cottage looms, hemp yarn being used as warps and dyed splits as wefts. There is no limit to the length, but as the blades of grass seldom grow longer than three or four feet, they cannot generally be made to exceed a yard in breadth. The industry is still primitive and requires organization. The mats thus made vary in price according to their size and quality, the finer ones costing twenty-five rupees and the coarser ones from one to five rupees. A Kakkálan and his wife working steadily could easily make over 20 rupees monthly; but they seldom make five. They too lead a vagrant life. The women are said to be proficient in palmistry. There is a tradition that a woman of the caste predicted to the wives of Dasaratha, regarding the birth of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrugna. Some Kakkálans tame snakes and monkeys, while others make beds and pillows for low caste men. Some again do agricultural work and earn a few annas a day. Other occupations of women

include 1. *Kāthukuttu* or boring the lobes of the ears, 2. *Kātu-vaip̄pu*-plastic operation of the ear which the Nayar women and others who wear heavy pendants ear ornaments often require, 3. *Komp̄u-vaip̄pu* or placing the twigs of a plant on any swelling of the body and dissipating it by blowing on it, 4. *Taiyyal* (tailoring), 5. *Pan̄patam* (snake dance), 6. fortune telling. The Kakkālans are, in short, a lazy, wandering people preferring to eke out their livelihood by snake charming and fortune telling.

A man for this is well trained during his boyhood between ten and twelve years of age. A mixture of  
**Rope-Dancing.**      gingelly oil, castor oil, and the oil of the margosa seed is well prepared, and with this mixture he is well shampooed for fourteen days and bathed in hot water. After this a strong rope is tied between two poles, on which the beginner is made to walk, holding the hands of a person who walks on the ground. Then he is made to walk alone. In the course of three months or so he becomes clever enough to perform various feats and for one performance he gets ten to twelve rupees.

Kakkālans bathe when polluted by Parayans and Nayadis ;  
**Social Status.**      and they pollute by touch almost every high caste man. They are their own barbers and washermen. The women wear iron and silver bangles and a *Palunkumāla* or necklace of variously coloured beads. They tatoo their arms. They numbered 682 at the last Census, 323 males, and 359 females.

#### KAVARAS.

This is a Tulu caste found in the Chittur Taluk of the Cochin State. They speak a mutilated form of Tulu.

The girls are married both before and after puberty.  
**Marriage Customs.**      Among relations a young man may marry the daughter of his maternal uncle. When a young man approaches the marriageable age, his brother or uncle selects a suitable girl for him after payment of two *fanams* to the parents of the girl. In the event of the willingness of the latter a formal arrangement is made in the presence of a few of their castemen, and an auspicious day for the wedding is also fixed. A sum of 35 *fanams* is also paid to the girl's parents for the expenses of the wedding. On that auspicious day the bridegroom goes to the bride's house with two pieces of

cloth, three measures of rice, a *tali*, and two cocoanuts. A *pūja* to Ganapathi is then performed, when an elderly member gives the *tali* with the flower to the bridegroom, who ties it round the neck of the girl. There is a feast for those who have accompanied them to the wedding. The ceremony lasts for two more days in the bride's house and for two more days in the house of the bridegroom. Twenty days after this the nuptials are performed in the bridegroom's house, when a few of the castemen are treated to a feast.

When a woman is about to become a mother, she is lodged in a separate hut for the delivery. One or two of her relatives may stay with her and act as mid-wives. Soon after delivery she is bathed and the woman is allowed to take no food on the day of delivery. She is generally fed on rice-gruel or boiled rice, and a mixture of pepper, turmeric, garlic, and asafoetida well dried and powdered and boiled in water to which some toddy is also added. A small quantity of this is given her both in the morning and in the evening for twenty days. Though she bathes every three days, yet she is under pollution for 28 days and is purified by a bath on the 29th day, when her temporary residence is burnt and reduced to ashes. The woman and her baby are then out of pollution, and a few of their castemen are treated to a feast. The naming ceremony takes place during the sixth month.

Kavaras are strictly monogamous. They have also the rudiments of caste government which deals with all matters connected with the well-being of the caste.

The inheritance is in the male line.

They are animists to a certain extent and their chief Gods are Kantakaranan, Muni, and the spirits of the departed, who are all located in one room and to whom they offer sacrifices once a year at least or as often as their means allow. They also worship Bhagavati.

The dead are generally buried. The son is the chief mourner and performs the ceremony. The pollution lasts for 15 days and the agnates are purified by a bath on the sixteenth day.

They make wicker work of all kinds. The men bring the bamboo and make every thing ready for their women to make wicker-work.



They eat the food of the Brahmans and the high class  
 Social Status.      Nayars; but do not eat at the hands of other  
                          caste men. These people pollute by touch the  
 Kakkálans but are polluted by the touch of Pánans, Pulayaans,  
 Cherumans and other low caste men (at a distance). They are  
 their own barbers and washermen. They are clothed very  
 scantily and the males very seldom shave their heads.

They numbered 474 at the last Census, 240 being males,  
 and 234 females.

### KUDUMI CHETTI.

The Kudumi Chetties are the Konkani Sudras, who are  
 also known as Kudumikkar or Goa Chetties. They are the  
 domestic servants of the Konkani Brahmans, in whose midst  
 they are invariably found; and their settlement in the State is  
 coeval with that of other immigrants from the Konkana  
 districts. They are found mostly in the Southern Taluks. At  
 the last Census, they numbered 12,371, 6,500 being males, and  
 5,871 females. They speak a somewhat corrupt form of the  
 Konkani dialect of Marathi.

Among the Kudumi Chetties there are four sub-divisions  
 Sub-divisions of      (Nari, Gathali, Kshatri and Gauthingri) which  
 the caste.              are really exogamous septs, the members of  
 which interdine, but do not intermarry.

The girls of the Kudumi Chetties are married before they  
 Marriage customs.      come of age; and their weddings, which last  
                          for seven days, are celebrated either in the  
 bride's house or in that of the bridegroom. The bride's price  
 is fifteen fanams (Rs. 4-4-6); and after marriage, they reside  
 with their husbands in their houses. When a girl comes of  
 age, she is under seclusion for six days, and on the morning of  
 the seventh day she is purified by a bath, when the castemen  
 who are invited are treated to a feast. Nuptials are performed  
 on any auspicious day in the house of the bridegroom. Poly-  
 gamy is allowed, but polyandry is unknown. Though widow-  
 marriage is not common, widows are kept as concubines  
 without entailing any social excommunication. A Kudumi  
 Chetti woman after childbirth is in confinement for twenty-  
 eight days, while her husband observes pollution for only seven  
 days. Among the Kudumi Chetties inheritance is in the male  
 line. They have the rudiments of caste government in

which the headman and the elderly members take part and settle all social disputes.

They are Vaishnavites and adore Krishna. Bhagavathi is also their tutelary deity, and the day on which the Bharani asterism falls is one of great festivity.

Religion.

The dead bodies are either burned or buried. The son is the chief mourner and the pollution lasts for fifteen days, and on the sixteenth day the members of the family and the agnates are purified by a bath and the sprinkling of water consecrated by a Brahman priest or from the well of a Konkani temple. They have their own priests for ceremonial purposes.

Funeral customs.

The Kudumi Chetties possess an uncommon capacity for continued hardwork. They are agricultural labourers, boatmen and porters. They clean tanks, wells and thatch houses.

Occupation.

Animal food and drinks are tabooed. Their dress and ornaments are peculiar. Garlands of coral and red beads called *palunku* form their necklets. Half jackets are not worn. Their favourite amusement is the *kolati*, for which ten or twelve stand in a circle with a stick in hand, a cubit long, and sing in praise of Krishna and Bhagavathi, striking the several sticks against one another so as to keep time with their joyous music. The Kudumi Chetties form an illiterate community in the State.

Food, dress, ornaments, etc.

### KUMBARAN.

Kumbarans, otherwise called in Telugu Kummaravadu, are a Telugu caste of potters found in small communities in the Trichur and Mukundapuram taluks of the State. They are mostly immigrants from the Tamil districts of Trichinopoly and Madura. The word is a corrupt form of the Sanskrit word Kumba-kara (maker of pots), though in social position, they are considered to be a superior class of Sudras. The story concerning the origin of the potter-classes is that they are descended from a Brahman father and a Sudra mother, for the sacrificial earthen vessels which are now made by them are, according to the Vedas, intended to be made by the priests themselves.

The Kumbaran girls are married both before and after puberty. Marriage ceremonies, which are similar to those of the Tamil Sudras, are performed in the bridegroom's house. The bride's price is 75 fanams (Rs. 21-6-10). The bridegroom is the tali-tier and the marriage ceremonies last for four days, during which friends and relations are entertained. Their caste-headman Pattakkāran officiates as the priest in this and other ceremonies.

Should a married girl become a widow, she may mate with another, but she cannot wear the *tali*. A man may marry two or three women at a time, but no woman can have more than one husband.

There are four functionaries—I. Pattakāran; 2. Chettikkaran, a member below him who executes the orders of the officer above him; 3. Thalikkaran, who has to discharge the duties of a Cheetayan among the Nayars, *i. e.*, to sweep and clean the house and the surroundings of his castemen after birth and death pollution. (His status is said to be a little lower than that of the others because of his menial service); 4. Yōgakkaran, whose duties consist in convening meetings in matters connected with the well-being of the caste.

For all caste-disputes and the like, the important members of the community meet under the orders of the Pattakāran. The matter is then discussed, and they come to a conclusion either one way or the other.

Their birth and death pollutions last for 15 days, at the end of which they have their house well swept, cleaned and sprinkled with water. The polluted members or agnates are purified by a bath, and a dose of sanctified water is then taken.

These Telugu potters are generally Vaishnavites, but they adore the demon-Gods, namely, Māri-Amman and Karupparāyan, to whom sheep and fowls are sacrificed in the first of Thulam, Makaram and Medam. They are also ancestor worshippers. With regard to the social status the castemen eat the food of the Brahmans, Ambalavasis, and Nayars.

The potter's apparatus is a simple, circular, horizontal, well-balanced, fly-wheel, generally four or five feet in diameter, which can be made to rotate for two or three minutes by a

slight impulse. This the potter loads with clay and then with a few easy sweeps and turns of his hands, he moulds his material into beautiful curves and symmetrical shapes and leaves the products of his skill to bake in the Sun. His implements are very few and his mode of working very simple. The wheel is a clumsily constructed and defective apparatus and is composed of several pliable pieces of wood or bamboo bent and tied together in the form of a wheel. This is covered over thickly with clay mixed with goat's hair or any fibrous substance. The four spokes on the centre of which the vessel rests are of wood, and the pivot is of hard wood or steel. The support for the wheel consists of a rounded mass of clay and goat's hair in which is embedded a piece of hard wood or stone, with one or two slight depressions for the axle or pivot to move in. The wheel is set in motion first by the hand, and then spun rapidly by the aid of a long piece of bamboo, one end of which fits into a slight depression on the wheel. Many are the defects of this apparatus. The potter has to stoop over it. It has a tendency to wobble or wobble and owing to the imperfect axle much time is wasted in spinning it, yet in spite of the rudeness and imperfection of the machine, the potters are expert in throwing and some of their small wares are thin and delicate. The only articles manufactured in the State under the head of pottery are the common earthen vessels for the domestic use of the poorer classes. Bricks and tiles are also made by them. They have no idea of the art of glazing or colouring of pottery. During the rainy season they cannot turn out much work, and most of them combine other work with their hereditary occupation.

The potters bake their wares in the following manner:— A circular slab about 10 feet in diameter is marked out on the ground in any convenient open spot. Small pieces of wood and dried sticks are spread on the space to a depth of about six inches, and a layer of *brātis* (dried cow-dung cakes) laid over the sticks. The vessels are then carefully piled on the top of this platform of fuel to a height of about five feet, and the whole is covered over with straw and plastered with clay, leaving a few small openings here and there to allow the smoke to escape. These arrangements being completed, the fuel at the bottom is lighted, and in the course of a few hours, the process of baking is completed. In ancient days the potters made sepulchral

urns of a large pyramid shape, and which have in recent times been excavated in Tinnevely, Madura, Malabar and elsewhere. Dr. G. U. Pope shows that these urns are mentioned in connection with the burial of heroes and kings as late as the eighth century A. D., and renders one of the Tamil songs bearing on the subject as follows :—

"Oh ! potter chief - - what toil hath befallen thee ?

The descendant of the Chera Kings ---

Hath gained the world of Gods. And so

'T is thine to shape an urn so vast

That it shall cover the remains of such an one ! "

Of late they have been taking more and more to agriculture, as the demand for their goods has been on the decrease. With the growing prosperity of the people, copper, bell-metal, and enamelled vessels are taking the place of earthen vessels, while the making of bricks and tiles has been taken out of their hands almost entirely by the new tile factories. Still, the industry is not likely to become extinct so long as there are poor people and so long as cheap earthen vessels are required on occasions of feasts and festivals. But their remuneration at the best of times is meagre—two to three annas a day on an average.

In the Tamil districts they bathe early and do their work. Women assist men in their work.

#### ODDEN.

Oddens, called also Voddens, are a Telugu people who originally came from Orissa. The word 'Vodde' or 'Odde' is said to be a corruption of the Sanskrit Odhra, the name of the country now called Orissa. They are found all over the Presidency, especially in the Districts of Nellore, Coimbatore, Madura, Tinnevely, Kurnool, and in the Province of Mysore, to which they must have come from Orissa in the time of the Nayakkans. Very probably the Oddens are the descendants of those who are said to have accompanied Hyder and Tippu as pioneers in their invasions of Malabar and Cochin : for, the places where they now reside are called *Kootarams* (tents). On my enquiry, some say that their ancestors came from the districts of Madura and Tinnevely.

The following tradition is ascribed to the origin of this caste. Once when Siva and Parvati were walking on a sultry day upon the earth, they

Origin of the Caste.

got very hot and thirsty. The drops of perspiration which fell from Siva were changed by him into a man with a pick and crow-bar; while those that fell from Parvati turned into a woman carrying a basket. The man and the woman quickly sank, while with the cooling waters the God and Goddess refreshed themselves, and in gratitude, promised the labourers certain gifts, the nature of which is not now known; but neither was satisfied and both grumbled, and this so incensed Siva that he cursed them, and vowed that they and their descendants should live by the sweat of their brow.

They generally live in flimsy huts, but some have become comparatively rich and live in tolerably well built houses.

There are eighteen exogamous sects, but they are not able to give their names.

When a girl reaches puberty, she is confined in a special hut, in which a piece of iron, margosa leaves (*Melia Azadirachta*), sticks of strychnos, *Nux Vomica*, and the arka plant (*Calotropis-Gigantia*) are placed to ward off evil spirits. For fear of these spirits, she is not allowed to eat meat, though eggs are permitted. On the seventh day a fowl is killed, waved in front of the girl and thrown away. At the end of the period of pollution, the hut is burnt down. Sometimes when the girl bathes on the first day, a sieve is held over her head and water is poured through it. In some places, on the eleventh day, chicken broth mixed with arrack (liquor) is administered in order to make the girl's back and waist strong. The hen from which the broth is made must be a black one, and she must have laid eggs for the first time. The flesh is placed in a mortar, pounded to a pulp, and boiled with the addition of condiments and finally arrack. The pollution lasts for fifteen days, and there is no feast on the following day when the girl bathes to become pure.

Both infant and adult marriages are in vogue among them.

At the most elaborate ceremonies, on the betrothal day, the bride's price, thirty rupees and thirty paras of paddy worth fifteen rupees, is paid and a present of three rupees is also made to her mother. Besides these payments, the castemen of the village have to receive from the bridegroom twelve rupees with which and similar savings made during the year they celebrate a feast on the *Pongal*

festival in Makaram (January-February). The wedding generally takes place at seven or eight o'clock in the evening. There is no tali-tying. The linking of the little finger by the conjugal pair forms the binding portion of the ceremony. Should a young woman be married a second time after the death of her husband, the ring fingers of the contracting couple have to be linked. An Odden woman after the death of her husband can marry as many times as she likes, and each wedding is solemnised by the contact of another finger. After this ceremony the bridegroom and his party are treated to a feast. The next day the bride is taken to the house of the bridegroom, where the bride's party are treated.

They follow inheritance in the male line.

They worship with equal reverence Siva and Vishnu in their various manifestations and offer *pujas* to them on the auspicious days of *Sivarātri*, *Navarātri*, and *Vishu*. Hanumán is also one of their favourite deities. Minor deities to whom goats and sheep are sacrificed are also held in veneration.

Religion.

The dead are generally buried. By some the dead body is wrapped up in a new cloth and carried by four men to the burial ground. On their way to the grave the corpse is laid on the ground and rice thrown over its eyes. It is then washed and the forehead is painted either with the *Namam* (Vaishnavite sect mark) or *Vibhúti* (sacred ashes), and *Kunkumam* in the case of a female. Earth is thrown in the grave before it is filled in by those assembled. The son is the chief mourner, who makes offerings to the spirits of the departed, and pollution lasts for fifteen days. On the last day of the death ceremonies, they repair to a tank or well outside the village. An effigy is made with mud to which cooked rice, etc., is offered. Some rice is placed on an *arka* leaf as an offering to the crows. If a married woman has died, the widower cuts through his waist thread, whereas a widow after her husband's death is taken to a watery edge and sits in a winnow. Her bangles are broken and water is poured over her head three times through the winnow. After bathing, she goes and sits in a room with a lamp and may see no one till the following morning. She is then taken to one or more temples and made to pull the tail of a cow three times.

Funeral customs.

The Oddens are an itinerant caste of tank-diggers and earth workers. They are a strong and hard-working class, but also drunken, gluttonous, and vicious. Very little faith can be placed in their most solemn promises. They will take advances from half a dozen employers within a week, and work for none of them, if they can help it.

They work in gangs in contract; and every man except the very old and the very young takes a share in the work. The women carry the earth in baskets and the men use the pick-axe and the spade, while the babies are tied up in cloths which are suspended in hammock fashion from the boughs of trees.

In the State they are generally engaged in digging tanks and wells, road construction, and in the improvement of waste lands, gardening, and all kinds of work which demands the labour of strong men, accustomed to the use of crow-bar, pick-axe, and powder.

The women wear bracelets. Tattooing on the fore-head with a central vertical line is universally practised, because, according to them, they should wear tattoo marks as a proof of their life on earth when they die.

They numbered 2,066 at the last Census, 1,032 being males and 1,034 females.

### OTAN

The Otans are a class of potters who were originally Tamil Sudras, but are now like the low caste Nayars in appearance. They are found mostly in the Thalapilli and Chittur Taluks of the State. They speak Malayalam interspersed largely with Tamil words.

The girls of the Otans are married both before and after puberty. A young man who wishes to marry a girl goes with his parents, friends, and relations to her house. The girl, neatly dressed in a cloth which he has brought, has the *tali* (marriage badge) tied round her neck by the bridegroom at the auspicious hour, which is generally some time in the evening. The guests who are invited are then treated to a feast at the expense of the bridegroom. Next morning after a similar feast at the expense of the bride's party,



the bridegroom returns to his own house with the bride and her party who are entertained by him.

The marriage customs above described are like those prevailing among the castemen in the Trichur and Mukundapuram Taluks. Dwelling in the midst of the Nayar community, they have adopted some of their customs after throwing aside the old Tamil marriage and other customs. On the other hand, their brethren in the Chittur Taluk still retain the Tamil customs owing to their close contact with the Tamil Sudras, and their marital relations are described below.

Girls are married both before and after puberty, and the ceremonies connected with the wedding are performed either in the house of the bride or in that of the bridegroom. The general items of the ceremonies are the preliminary negotiations and settlement, the planting of posts for the marriage booth at an auspicious hour, the planting of the Muhurta-kal (decorated post), the placing of pots and other small vessels with seedlings, the preparation of the *homam* (sacred fire) by a Brahman priest, the clasping of the bride's hand, the treading on the mortar, the looking at the Ursa Major, the going round the fire, paying obeisance to the elders. The guests assembled are treated to a feast. There is nothing of importance on the second and third days, and on the morning of the fourth day, the bridegroom and the bride are seated together in the pandal, and blessed by those assembled while the string round the wrist is also untied. A doll in the form of a child is then exchanged, saying that it is, begotten on her. Each of them is given to eat a little rice dyed yellow with turmeric, and then one end of the cloth, which he wears, is tied to a corner of her dress, and some water coloured yellow is poured over them. A pot of water with a piece of gold and silver is placed in front of the bridal pair, and they are directed to pick them out. The piece of gold or silver is said to predict the birth of a male or female child. The whole party along with the married couple move to a neighbouring river or tank, and after bathing return to the bride's house. Neatly dressed and adorned in their best, the bride and the bridegroom, along with the castemen, go in procession to the temple to worship the deity and return home. After another feast, and a donation from those assembled there, the marriage ceremony is brought to a close. Polygamy is in vogue among

them, but polyandry is unknown. Widow-remarriage is freely allowed.

A girl who comes of age is lodged separately in a room, and she is under pollution for fifteen days, and on the sixteenth, she bathes to purify herself, when the castemen who are invited are treated to a feast.

The Otans follow inheritance in the male line. They have the rudiments of a caste assembly, whose duties are similar to those prevailing in other castes. The caste headman is called a Chettiyar, whose permission has to be obtained for marriage by the contracting parties with a present of fifty *puthans* (Rs. 2—9—8).

A woman, who is in confinement, has to observe pollution for ten days; but many enter the kitchen and mingle with the rest of the family only after fifty-six days, though the rest of the family are free from it after ten days.

The Otans profess to be Sivites, but adore Ganapathi.

Religion.

They are animists, and worship the spirits of the departed, to whom offerings are made on the nights of the first of Karṣatakam (July-August), and Thulam (October-November).

The dead bodies of the Otans are generally buried. The

Funeral Customs.

son is the chief mourner, and the pollution lasts for ten days. On the morning of the eleventh, the agnates bathe early, and are purified by the *Chettian*, who sprinkles sanctified water over them. The chief mourner makes offerings of cooked rice to the departed spirit, and entertains the Andis to a feast, and on the twelfth day the castemen are entertained.

The Otans follow the traditional occupation of pottery.

Occupation.

A few are wood cutters, while a few others do agricultural work and earn three to four annas a day.

The males wear a small loin cloth like the low caste Sudras.

Dress.

Their women wear a piece of cloth five yards long folded twice and a small cloth to cover their breasts. They also wear a number of brass bangles on each arm, while their ears are much dilated to wear the palmyra leaf rings. They are a poor and backward community.

They numbered at the last Census 3,231, 1,663 being males, and 1,568 females.

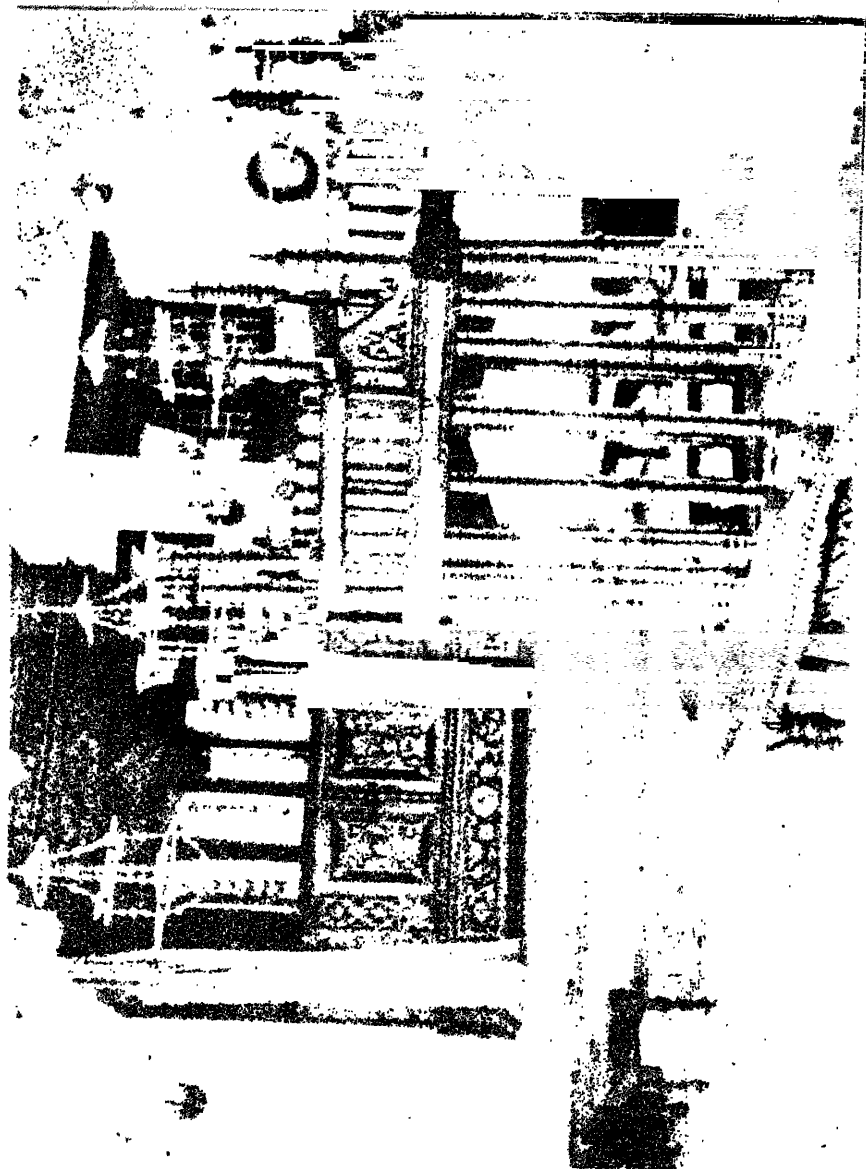
## PANDARAM.

The Pandarams are, strictly speaking, the Tamil beggars who take the highest position among beggars, as they frequently follow semi-religious callings in addition to their regular profession of begging. They appear to be a class composed of recruits from various Sudra castes (Vellala and Pillai). In the Tamil districts, the Pandaram caste is composed of respectable people who have settled down as land holders, and *Sanyasis* (ascetics) and priests of certain Matams (religious institutions) and managers of richly endowed temples, such as those at Tiruvádudurai in Tanjore and Mailam in South Arcot. The Pandarams are said to have been originally *Sozhia Vellalas*.

In the Chittur and Trichur Taluks of the State, they are, with a few exceptions, poor, and there are among them several sub-divisions based chiefly on the occupations they follow. They are—(1) Poo Pandaram, who make garlands in temples; (2) Kal-Pandaram, who are either *lingadharies* (Lingayets) or polish precious stones; (3) Mendicant Pandarams, who are recruited from various classes and wear the *lingam*. The members of all the sub-divisions speak Telugu. There is also a Tamil-speaking class in Trichur.

Girls of the Pandarams are married both before and after puberty. When a girl is selected, the parents of the bride and the bridegroom together with their relatives meet together in the house of the former to make the necessary arrangements for the celebration of the wedding. A piece of cloth (*putava*) is presented to the bride on the occasion. The guests assembled are treated to a feast, and the bridegroom also attends it, and pays the bride's price, which in former days was Rs. 17½. On the next or some other auspicious day, after an elaborate ceremonial by fire of the castemen, the bride and bridegroom wear the *lingam*, which then entitles them to wed. Among the castemen at Trichur this ceremony is performed just before the tali-tying. A day or two previous to this, a marriage booth is erected at an auspicious hour. A bamboo post decorated with mango and other leaves and flowers is also planted an hour or two before the time fixed for the wedding. A pot filled with water and a similar one containing rice and dholl, as well as eleven small ones with various seeds, are placed in a conspicuous part in the pandal or inside the house. A kind

## Marriage Customs.



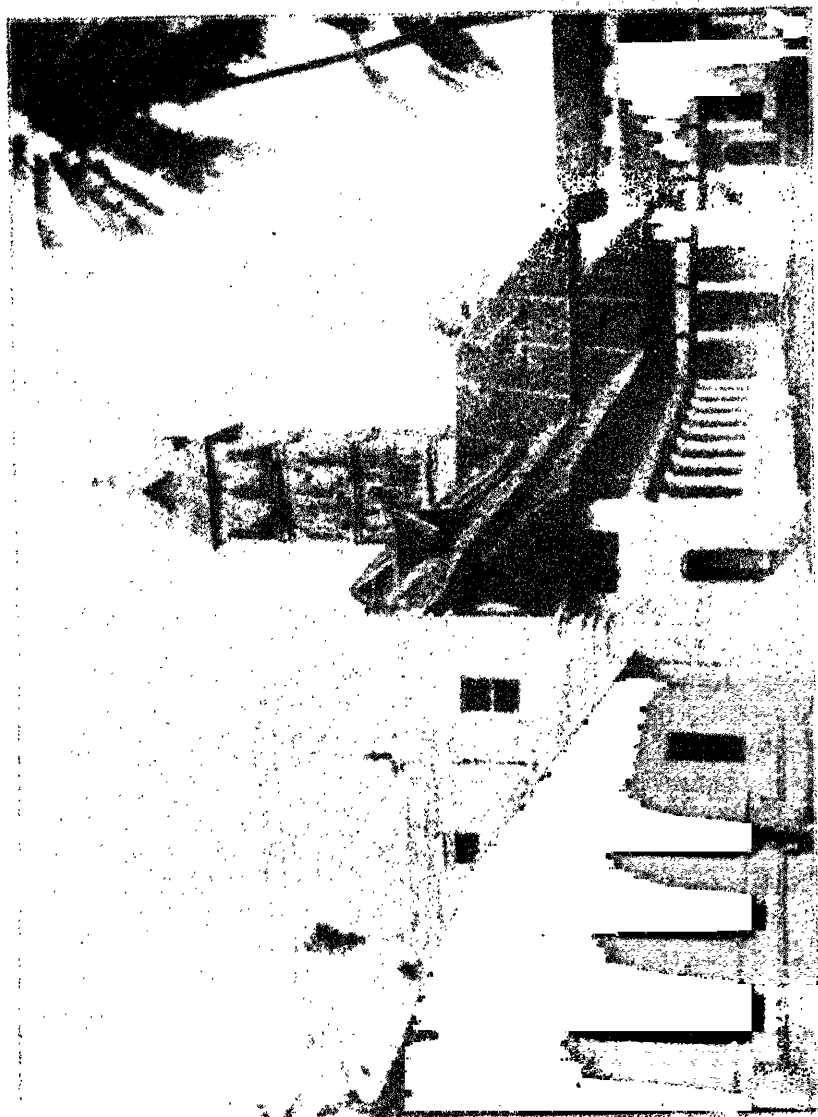
SYNAGOGUE OF THE WHITE JEWS.



BLACK JEWS OF COCHIN.



A GROUP OF WOMEN OF THE BLACK JEWS.



OLLUR CHURCH.

ROMO-SYRIAN BISHOPS (METRANS).



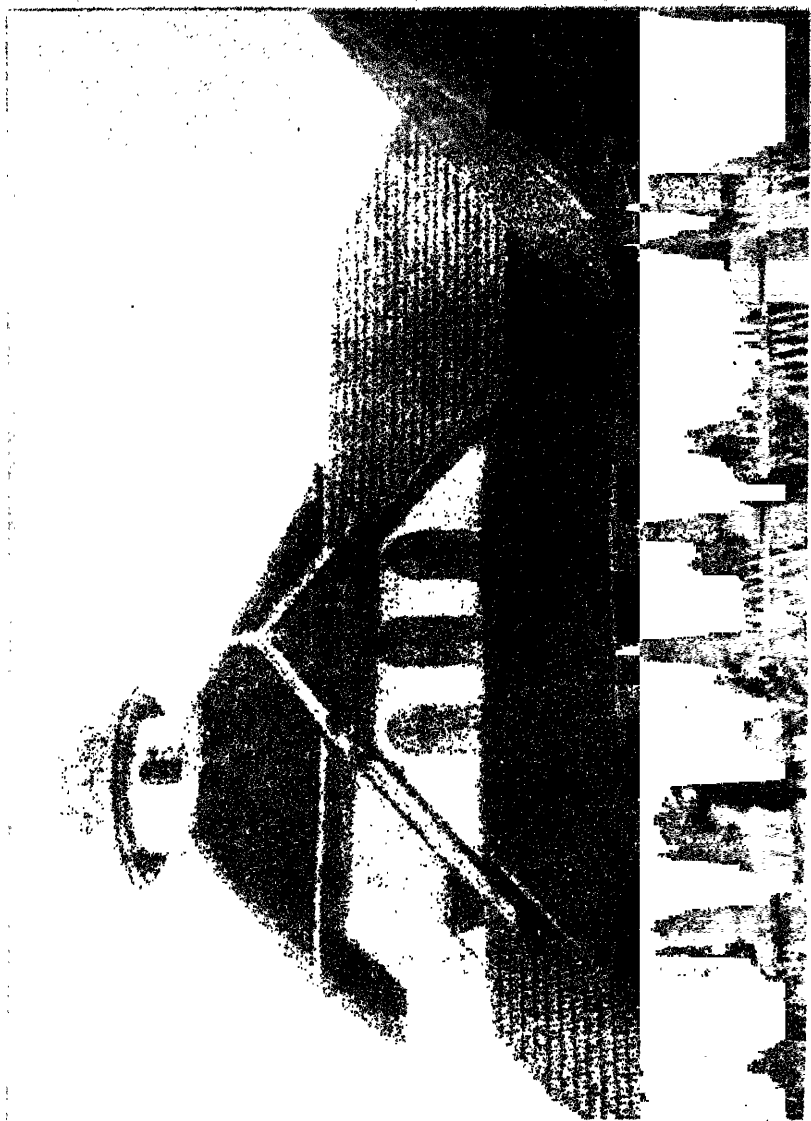




A GROUP OF JACOBITE SYRIAN LADIES.



A GROUP OF JONAKAN MAPILAS



A JONAKAN MAPPILA MOSQUE.

of ancestor-worship also takes place in the house of the bride and the bridegroom. On the morning of the day fixed for the wedding, the bridegroom along with his party halts at a house near that of the bride, whence he is invited to the marriage booth, where he gets his face shaved and then bathes. Dressing himself like a Brahman bridegroom, he and his party go to worship Ganapathy with offerings in the temple dedicated to him. After their return home the various formalities relating to the wedding ceremony are gone through, and these are similar to those among the Tamil Sudras. The guests are then treated to a feast. There is nothing of importance on the second and third days; but on the morning of the fourth day, the married couple bathe, worship the local deity, and return home, and, after a procession in the evening they are served with some sweets which forms the binding portion of the ceremony. This is brought to a close by each of the guests contributing eight annas or a rupee to meet the wedding expenses. On the fifth or sixth day the bride accompanies the bridegroom to his house. Polygamy is in vogue among them, but polyandry is unknown. There is no prohibition against widow-remarriage. Inheritance is through the male line.

They are Sivites and worship Siva-lingam also. Ganapathi and Parásakti are also venerated. Ancestor-worship is performed mostly on the days of *Sankramam* in Karkitakam, Thulam and Makaram. The Pandarams are initiated into the Sivite religion by a rite called *Dikshai*, which is divided into five stages, *Samaya*, *Nirvana*, *Vishesha*, *Kalasothana* and *Acharya-Abhishekam*. Some are temple servants and supply flowers for the Gods, while others sing hymns (*Deváram*) during the temple service. Opinion is divided as to whether they are real Lingayats. Pandarams wear the linga in one of the usual modes, and are priests to others who are of the Lingayat faith, and are fed by them on funeral and other ceremonial occasions. These are mostly of the begging section. The celebrities wear orange tawny cloths and daub sacred ashes all over their bodies, wear sandals with iron spikes, carry in their hands an iron-*trisulam* and *dandá-yudha* (emblems of Siva) and allow their hair to become matted. When they go about the streets, they sing popular Tamil songs and beat against their begging bowl an iron chain tied to it.

Married men also beg, but only use a bell-metal gong and a wooden mallet. Most of these help pilgrims to the more famous Siva temples in the Madras Presidency—Palni, Tiru-tani, or Tiruvannamalai.

The dead are buried in a sitting posture as among other

**Funeral Customs.**

Lingayats. The chief mourner, the son, bathes in the early morning, keeps a pot of water and a lamp near the place of burial, erects a *Samádhi* with a lingam over the spot and four bulls at each corner, to which pujas and offerings of bread, boiled rice, and plantain fruits are made, and these are eaten by the four castemen, *Basavans*, who carried the corpse to the burial ground, and they purify the shoulders with a mixture of milk and water. The pollution lasts for fifteen days, and on the morning of the sixteenth the members of the family and other agnates are purified by a bath, and entertain the castemen in the evening or the night of the same day. A puja is performed by the caste priest before a lighted lamp and four vessels of water either in the house or by the side of a tank or river, and with this water, the priest goes to the temple, washes the *Basavan*, and makes offerings to him. The holy water and the offerings are then partaken of by the members of the family. This is called *Moksha-deepam* (light of salvation), by the aid of which the departed spirit enters Kailas (abode of Siva). On the anniversary day of the death every year, a kind of memorial service is performed for the spirit of the departed by inviting a few of their castemen, washing their feet, and pouring the water thus collected over the *Samádhi*. Siva-lingam is also worshipped. The castemen are then treated to a feast.

As had been said above, one section of the Pandárams

**Occupation.**

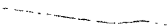
polishes precious stones, some again weave mats, a few are cultivators, and a large number of them are beggars. In the Trichur town and its neighbourhood where there is a large number of them, they make *pappadam* (a kind of thin circular bread made of kidney beans) and have begun to adopt the customs of the Sudras among whom they live.

### VEZHAMBAN.

The Vezhambans, who form a small and poor community in the vicinity of the Chittur town, had been originally a Tamil

caste of Kásukára-Chettis, who, afraid of the prosecutions of Hyder Ali and Tippu Sultan, fled from their native country and settled in the Chittur Taluk. It is said that they were clever in magic and sorcery, and were, on that account, called Vezhambans. They are now a purely Malayali caste, and have adopted the customs and manners of the Nayars and follow inheritance in the female line, and in point of social status profess to be above the Izhuvans, whose touch pollutes them. Some are cultivators, while others do cooly work.

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## CHAPTER XV.

# THE JEWS.

In the midst of the Native or Hindu population of the Cochin State is found a small, but interesting colony of Jews, consisting of a small number of families scattered about in a few localities. In the last Census, they numbered but 1,137 and formed one-thirteenth of the Jewish population in British India, or one-sixteenth of that in British India including the Feudatory States

With regard to their advent into the Cochin State there are no authentic accounts and whatever records they may have possessed were either lost when their original settlement of Cranganore was captured by the Portuguese in 1565 or when the same people plundered their synagogue in Cochin, and the number of those that may have been saved through these periods were further reduced during their struggle with the Dutch at a later period. Hence in the absence of any genuine historical records, writers are obliged to depend upon oral traditions and other sources of information claiming to be historical, but conflicting with one another. One of these is the record of the contact of the Jews with the Dravidians as mentioned in the Bible<sup>1</sup>. Solomon's fleet manned by Phœnician sailors appear to have obtained from the Malabar Coast 'ivory, apes, peacocks' as well as silver and gold to adorn his magnificent court. From this it would seem that the King's sailors visited the West Coast of Southern India, and it is not improbable that the Jews also might have made similar visits to these parts as traders.

Another source of information is a document in the hands of the Cochin Jews. It is a narrative, written in Hebrew, of the events about their first arrival in India and said to have been handed down to them from their forefathers.

Early immigration  
and settlement of the  
Jew on the Malabar  
Coast.

1. Kings XX, 22, and 2. Chronicles IX, 22.

The Rev. Claudius Buchanan, who was much interested in these people and their manuscript records, studied them at first hand in 1807, and published his account of them in his *Christian Researches*. We are indebted to him for the following account. After the destruction of the second temple of Jerusalem, a colony of Jews consisting of men, women, priests and Levites, dreading the conqueror's wrath, left their own country, came to the Malabar Coast and settled in a place called Cranganore with the permission of the king then ruling over that territory. "He allowed them patriarchal jurisdiction within the district with certain privileges of nobility, and the Royal grant was engraved, according to the custom of those days, on a plate of copper".<sup>1</sup> This took place in the year 490 A. D., and the copper plate is still in their possession. The descendants of these colonists lived in peace for about a thousand years, and the number of headmen who governed them was 72. Soon after their settlement other Jews came from Judea, and among them was a man of great wisdom Rabbi Samuel, a Levite of Jerusalem with his son Rabbi Jahuda Levita. They brought with them the silver trumpets, made use of at the time of the Jubilee, which were saved at the destruction of the second temple, and on these were inscribed the ineffable name. Other tribes of Jews who had heard of their prosperity joined them, from time to time, from Spain and other places. There were also among them Bene Israel or children of Israel, who came from Ashakanaz, from Egypt, from Tsoba and other places, besides those who had already settled down here.

In this account there are three periods of time to be noted—1. The advent of the Jews into Cochin after the destruction of the second temple by the Romans in 70 A. D., 2. The grant of the charter after the date of their advent by a long interval of time. 3. The settlement of their forefathers at Cranganore for about a thousand years. "These data", says Dr. Milne Rae, "seem to be mutually inconsistent and cannot be accepted as true".<sup>2</sup>

Yet another source of information is the *Sasanam* or the copper plate charter now in their possession. It consists of two copper plates with the inscriptions on three sides, and the

1. *Christian Researches*.

2. *The Syrian Church in India*, by Dr. George Milne Rae, p. 139.



character in which it is written is the *Vettezhuthu* "which is believed to be an adaptation of some foreign (probably Scmitic) character to a Dravidian language<sup>1</sup>". The charter has been translated by several scholars, and no two translations agree in their entirety, and hence possess merely an academic interest:

These translations with the remarks on them will be found in the account of these people in the second Volume of "*The Tribes and Castes of Southern India*, page 463-73," but the privileges contained in the charter and enjoyed by them are herein given. The principality of Anjuvannam and all its revenues were conferred on Joseph Rabban, the headman of the Jewish community, and to his prosperity, sons and daughters. They are allowed to fire salutes on all solemnities, ride on elephants and horses, hold stately processions, make use of cries of honour and of torches in the daytime, different musical instruments, besides a big drum, to walk upon roads spread with white linen on grand occasions, hold tournaments with sticks and sit under a stately curtain, and to wear five coloured cloths and long dresses. These privileges are not enjoyed by the White Jews

Mr. Logan in his *Manual of Malabar* writes that the Jews have traditions which carry back their arrival on the coast to the time of their escape from servitude under Cyrus in the sixth century B. C., and the same fact is referred to in the *History of India* by Sir William Hunter. This eminent historian in his *Indian Empire*, speaks of the Jews settling in Malabar long before the second century A. D. A Roman merchantship, that sailed regularly from Myos Harmaz on the Red Sea to Arabia, Ceylon and Malabar, is reported to have found a colony in the second century A. D. In regard to the Jewish settlement in Malabar, Mr. White observes that the Jews themselves say that Mar. Thomas, the Apostle, arrived in India. in 52 A. D. In view of the commercial intercourse between the Jews and the people on the Malabar Coast long before the Christian Era, it seems probable that Christianity followed in the wake of Judaism. The above facts justify the conclusion that the Jews might have settled in Malabar as early as the first century A. D. Having determined within

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1. *The Syrian Church* by Dr. George Milne Rae, page 139-140.

certain probabilities the date of their advent to Malabar, Dr. Milne Rae, relying on the sack of Jerusalem by Nebuchadenezzar, the attack and their dispersal into Arabia by Pompey before and Titus after the Christian era, and similar persecutions in Persia and Arabia, concludes that they must have been immigrants from one of the two latter countries.<sup>1</sup>

Then as regards the date of the grant, authorities again indulge in conjectures without advancing any satisfactory evidence in support of them. After laborious researches, Dr. Burnell fixed the date to 700 A. D. Accepting this date, Dr. Milne Rae argues that the Jews must have received the grant a few generations after the settlement, which might have been about the sixth century A. D. In one of the translations of the charter obtained by the Dutch Governor Moens, there is a reference to the year 379 A. D., but this date does not appear in the translations of Gundert, Ellis, Burnell and Oppert. Mr. C. M. Whish fixes 231 A. D. as the probable date of the grant, and it has been already pointed out that they are supposed to have come in contact with the Dravidian people as early as the time of Solomon about 1000 B. C.

The history of the Jews from the date of their settlement in Cranganore to the date of their receiving the charter is almost a blank. In their adopted country they enjoyed toleration which was denied to them elsewhere. They soon became prosperous, obtained social distinction and were favoured by circumstances that resulted in the granting of their charter, which secured for them higher privileges and importance. "The Jews", says Dr. Milne Rae, "did not obtain their privileges for nothing. It is probable that they gave a substantial *quid pro quo*. For the Jewish charter was granted at the time when the western Chalukyan raids resulted in the dismemberment of the Pallava kingdom and its confederate dynasty of which Kerala was one. Very likely the Royal Treasury needed replenishing, and the rank of the army, reinforcements. The Jews probably provided the sinews of war. The Perumal's necessity was then the Jews' opportunity, and they made their bargain accordingly".<sup>2</sup> After this event

<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup>. The Syrian Church in India by Dr. George Milne Rae, p. 143-44, 146.

to about the middle of the fifteenth century, they were probably prosperous.

Dissensions arose among themselves, and probably there had been a great dispute between the White and the Black Jews. The latter claimed equal privileges with the former, and demanded the right of intermarriage with them. The former refused to listen to any proposals of this nature. A war ensued, in which the White Jews were nearly exterminated; but with the help of the local chief, the rebels were reduced to obedience. Since then the two races became independent communities.<sup>1</sup>

In the sixteenth century the Jews fell victims by turn to the oppression of the fanatical Moors and the bigotted Christians. In the year 1524, the Muhammadans attacked the Jews and the Christians of Cranganore, the reason alleged being that the followers of the Prophet had resorted to various tricks for adulterating the pepper and other wares brought to market, and that some of these people were engaged in the discovery of the tricks for the punishment of the offenders. A large number of the Jews were killed, and the rest were driven out of the town; but the Christians were saved by the Nayars, who retaliated, and in turn expelled the Muhammadans from Cranganore. The Jews were thus considerably diminished in numbers, and underwent many vicissitudes, and since then they never enjoyed the same power. The destruction of Cranganore, the Jews describe as the desolation of Jerusalem in miniature. They were first received into the country with some favour and consideration agreeably to the tenor of the general prophesy concerning the Jews, for, no country was to reject them; but after they had obtained wealth and attracted the notice of men, they were driven to the lowest abyss of human sufferings and reproach.<sup>2</sup>

After the destruction of Cranganore many of the Jews fled to Chennamangalam, where a small colony of them still exists.

There were no Jews in Cochin at the time of the arrival of the Portuguese in 1,500 A.D., but there were some in Cranganore in a miserable state of destitution, and these were probably the remnant of the old community that had either returned or escaped from servitude. They were finally compelled to desert

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1 and 2. *Land of the Perumals*, p. 345, 347-50.

their original settlement by the Portuguese, who enlarged and strengthened the fort of Cranganore. About 1565, they seem to have obtained refuge in Cochin where they built the Jew Town under the walls of the Fort. This town was again pillaged and set fire to, by the Portuguese, when the inhabitants fled to the highlands and returned only after it was taken by the Dutch. After this time prosperity again dawned upon them.

In 1685 an immigration of White Jews took place from Amsterdam, and subsequently from Palestine, Persia, Bagdad, Egypt, England, Poland, Germany, especially from Frankfort, and Spain, and out of the first batch, four merchants, namely, Moses Feriera de Silva, Isaac Irgus, Isaac Moorkat, Abraham Vost of Sepharadim arrived at Cochin from Amsterdam. The Spanish and Portuguese Jews are called Sepharadim to distinguish from the Azhkanazim, the German and Polish Jews. They visited the Cochin Jews and agreed to live with them. They wrote to Amsterdam about what they saw and heard of the Jews of Malabar, and desired to let them have all the books they required. The congregation of Amsterdam sent the books of Moses, of the Prophets, of the Laws and other books, which proved a great blessing to the Cochin congregation. Henceforth they formed a mutual alliance and frequently corresponded with each other, receiving all such books as they wanted, and at the same time, sending back all that was desired of them. Thus the customs of the Cochin Jews became those of Sepharadim (Spanish Jews).<sup>1</sup>

The Jews of Cochin are strictly divisible into the White or Jerusalem Jews, and the Black Jews, and an intermediate class, Myukkkhasim or Brown Jews. The White and the Brown Jews are believed to have their blood unmixed, but at present, the latter as well as the Black Jews are merged physically into one community known as Black Jews. The so called Black Jews are considered to be the descendants of the five hundred slaves said to have been purchased by the first Jewish settlers and of other natives of Malabar who became converts to the Jewish faith; but this statement is not supported by any authority. The Black Jews are not connected with the White Jews by inter-marriage, nor have they any of the Cochin or Levite families

Subdivision among the Jews.

1. Land of the Perumals, page 339.

among them. They have none of the Levitical ceremonies in their Synagogues. They form a separate community in Cochin. Still they have the Mosaical Laws (Torah), and their customs and usages are similar to those of the White Jews with a few exceptions and differences in their prayers and songs. They were a large community at one time, but owing to intestine feuds with their White brethren which led to the war already referred to, they were nearly exterminated. There were also emigrations since the downfall of the Dutch, who treated them well, and their number became very much reduced.

The Jews are now found in that part of Cochin called the Jew Town, at Ernakulam the eastern side of the Cochin backwater, at Chennamangalam, at Mala, and at Parur, the last being in Travancore territory. The Jew Town is a part of Mattancheri and consists of a narrow street with "quaint houses of solid build on each side", many of which are of Dutch origin and style. In this street, live side by side the families of the White and Black Jews. Most of the houses have thick laterite walls, with large windows provided with seats and double shutters of glass and wood, and have upper storeys with tiled roofs. In the houses of the rich the members occupy the second storey, which is partitioned into a hall and a number of rooms, one of which is used as the dining room, while the others are drawing rooms and dormitories. These rooms are neatly furnished with chairs, tables, sofas, and other articles of furniture, while the walls are decorated with fine pictures and photographs of the members of the family. The floor rooms are their store rooms, and kitchens of not too clean an aspect. Their houses have no compounds nor gardens. In the door posts of every room, the Jews, according to the Mosaic Law, insert small tubes of tin or bamboo, in which they place portions of Deuteronomy, and the name of Jehovah is written upon very thin leather or vellum. When they leave their houses or simply go from room to room, they kiss the tube or, touching it with their fingers, kiss them. The Black Jews in Ernakulam, Mala, and Chennamangalam are generally poor, and their houses are therefore very small. On the verandah in front, they have their shops, and the rooms inside are occupied for domestic purposes; thus the Jews live near a backwater or canal for

the convenience of their trade. The Jews originally preferred to live in a separate part of the town, where they could follow their precepts in their own way, and be beside the synagogue to pray three times a day. Abraham might well say that their residence was more a privilege than a disability.

Among the sons of Israel cousins of all degrees, both on the father's and the mother's side, intermarry. **Marriage prohibitions.** Prohibitions of marriage between kindred are based upon the fear of complicate relationship, concentration of affection within too narrow a circle, inducement to keep the property in the family, violation of God's law as they outrage natural modesty, incest and the injurious results to the offspring.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the result of the many frequent consanguinous marriages among the Jews of Europe and elsewhere has been an extraordinarily large number of physical and mental defectives among them. Thus most writers on the pathology of the Jews say that the excessive proportion of deaf, mute, blind, insane, idiotic, imbecile and diabetic persons among them, is the result of breeding in-and-in, which has been going on for centuries among the Jews of Europe".<sup>1</sup>

All statistical evidence in England, France, Prussia, Hungary and Russia, shows that the frequency of marriage of near kin among them is rather very great. Anthropologists are in doubt whether this in-breeding is the sole cause of the maladies already enumerated among the Jews. There is, at present a consensus of opinion that consanguinous marriages, contracted among individuals, are not at all detrimental to the offspring. If the parents are perfectly healthy and exempt from all commencing degeneracy, they can give birth to children at least as healthy as themselves; but if the degeneracy has already tainted both the parents, the offspring will show it in a greater degree, and will tend towards its entire disappearance. But when such marriages are contracted by defectives, the physical or mental defects are likely to appear in a more accentuated form in the progeny.<sup>2</sup>

Among the Jews celibacy is unknown, and they have a proverb that he who does not marry is no man. **Marriage Customs.** Marriage is, as among the Brahmans,

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1 and 2. The Jews, page 250-251, Contemporary Science series,

looked upon as a religious duty; and according to the Talmud, the authorities can compel a man to enter into wedlock with a woman of the race. He who lives single at the age of twenty is cursed by God almost as if he were a murderer. Among them childlessness is considered a horrible calamity. The desire for offspring, particularly sons, had its root in the religious belief, and is an outcome of the idea, that the spirit of the dead would be made happy by homage received at the hands of the male descendants.<sup>1</sup>

Among the Jews, girls are married both before and after they come of age. The three essential ceremonies in connection with their marriage are the engagement, betrothal, and the actual wedding; the betrothal being not merely a promise to wed, but the actual first step in the ceremony and therefore irrevocable. When a young man has to be married, his parents and others of his family select for him a suitable girl, and the matter is talked over with her parents. In the event of their approval, the elders meet in the house of the bridegroom on an appointed day, and all arrangements leading to the wedding and the dowry to be given to the bride, as also the sum of money to be paid to the Synagogue, are determined. The White Jews do not pay anything to the Synagogue at present. The elders assembled there are served with liquor and *bán-supári*, and are sometimes treated to a feast, after which they depart.

After two days, the bridegroom's party, males and females, assemble in the house of the bride-elect, when a metal dish with a tumbler containing grape juice, a gold or silver ring or a rupee, and with a piece of handkerchief covering the dish, is placed in a conspicuous place. The bridegroom, with his two best men gaily dressed, comes in procession to the house, and there they are well received. He stands facing the bride and puts the ring on her first finger or gives the rupee with the recital of the following Hebrew texts, the significance of which is:—"Behold thou art sanctified unto me by this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israël". He then drops a little grape juice into her mouth. The bridegroom's party assembled there are treated to a feast. This ceremony is called *Ariyath Mehu Déséth*. The White Jews perform this ceremony in the Synagogue at the wedding time.

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1. Evolution of Marriage, by Letourneau,

On the same night, the bride is bathed and dressed in white costumes. She then goes to the Synagogue to worship the Law.

The bridegroom and his best men get shaved on the wedding day. After rubbing their heads with the milk of the coconut, or some scented oil, they all bathe. On their return home some coins are waved round the head of the bridegroom, and are given in charity to the poor people. Towards the evening the guests assemble in the house of the bridegroom. After a light meal the bridegroom-elect neatly dressed in silk garments and decked out with flower wreaths, gold necklaces, and rings for the fingers, goes to the Synagogue, where the bride elect, veiled, similarly dressed and adorned in her best, and with a *tali* tied round her neck by her mother or sister, also comes in procession.

The elders and the women are already assembled in the Synagogue. The bridegroom and the bride are given special seats. After the evening service has been conducted by the minister of the Synagogue, some elderly member sings a Hebrew wedding song, when the minister along with the bridegroom goes to the spot where the bride is seated. The minister recites Hebrew texts, and the bridegroom with silver ring and grape juice performs the ceremony with the permission of the minister and the elders, and exclaims:—"Praise be to the Lord for his goodness to us". The guests then plead for His infinite mercy. The bridegroom says, "May joy increase among the children of Israel", and the guests, "May it spread in Jerusalem". The bridegroom—"May the Holy Temple be again built, and may the prophets Elija and Moses come and gladden the hearts of the people of Israel. Blessed art thou, O Lord, King of the universe, who hath sanctified us with thy commandments, who has forbidden fornication and restrained us from the betrothed but hath permitted those who are married to us by means of canopy and wedlock. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hath sanctified Israel by means of canopy and wedlock". "Thou", says the bridegroom, "art married unto me by the cup, and by the silver ring that is in the glass of grape, and by all that is under my authority, in the presence of these witnesses and masters according to the Law of Moses and Israel" "Praised be the Lord, who created the fruit of



the vine and suffered men and women to be joined in wedlock". Looking towards the girl and calling her by name, he says, "Thou hast been betrothed and married to me by this cup, whose grape juice thou shalt drink, by the silver in the cup, and by all that is belonging to me; I wed thee before these witnesses and the minister." He then drinks half of the grape juice and repeats twice over, "By this thou art being wed to me" and then bending pours the rest of the grape juice into the bride's mouth. Then taking the ring, he holds her right hand, and pushing the ring over the tip of her first finger says, "So thou art married to me by this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israel. After this has been twice repeated, he takes a tumbler with some grape juice in it and a necklace of gold and black beads, puts the necklace round the girl's neck, drinks some grape juice and pours the rest into her mouth, and dashes the glass to pieces on the floor. Here some elderly member or a young man reads the written commandments of *Katúba*. Before reading the last sentence the priest takes the fringes of the four corners of the bridegroom's veil or *siseth*, and says three times "God commands that he who marries shall clothe and feed thee and thy children". The minister asks him thrice if he consents to it, and the bridegroom gives an answer in the affirmative. "Ye shall surely rejoice, ye loving companion, as your Creator caused your forefathers to rejoice in the garden of Eden. Blessed art thou, O Lord, King of the Universe, who causeth the bride and the bridegroom to rejoice. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who hath created joy and gladness, bridegroom and bride, love and brotherhood, delight and pleasure, peace and friendship. Speedily, O Lord, our God, let there be in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of merriment of the bridegroom and the marriage feast and the music of youth. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who causeth the bridegroom and bride to rejoice and prosper". The priest then repeats three Texts. At the end of the third text the guests clap their hands, and the musicians, catching the sound, beat the drum. When the music is over, the bridegroom is seated on the right side of the bride on another chair, and *Weri Mayim Syhar* (sugar-water) is

handed to all present <sup>1</sup>. The minister, then putting his right hand on their heads, blesses the married couple and directs the bridegroom to support the wife and children that may be begotten on her. All these the bridegroom promises to fulfill. Then the guests invoke a blessing and the bridegroom signs a paper in the presence of two witnesses and the minister. The minister reads the last sentence of the marriage covenant, sings it, and, rolling it up, gives it to the bridegroom, who delivers it to the girl, saying, "Take this marriage covenant and henceforth all that belongs to me is thine". She takes it in open hands and makes it over to her father. The guests then sing a song in praise of God, with whose will the ceremony is performed, and in praise of the bride and bridegroom. The minister takes a glass of wine and recites the seven following blessings:—"Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who created the fruit of the vine; blessed art thou, O Lord, our King of the universe, who created everything for thy glory. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, who hath created man in the likeness of thy form, and prepared for him for a like form of everlasting fabric. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, who hath formed man, who shall rejoice and delight at the gathering of his children unto him with joy. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, who causeth him to rejoice with children":

The bride and the bridegroom along with the whole community return to her house, where they are properly welcomed and treated to a feast. The bridegroom and his two best men and the bride with her two companions are lodged in a specially decorated room. The marriage festivities last for seven days, when on each night, after the performance of the evening service in the Synagogue, the priest performs a ceremony. During this period the bride and bridegroom take their meals together. The days are spent in songs and other amusements. On the night of the seventh day, they attend the Synagogue, where, after the performance of a ceremony by the priest, a song is sung, and the marriage is then brought to an end.<sup>2</sup>

If the bride is of age, the nuptials may take place on any auspicious night during the wedding days, as arranged by the parents on both sides. The elders of the community are

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1. This is not in vogue among the White Jews of Cochín,

2. This prevails only among the Black Jews of Cochín,

invited to attend and are treated to a feast. They then determine whether the bride has been a virgin pure and chaste, as otherwise difficulties may arise and she may be divorced.

When a girl comes of age, she is kept in seclusion for seven days from the disappearance of the menses. On the morning and evening of the seventh day she bathes and becomes free from uncleanness. The girl is dressed in rich clothes, and if she is married, the nuptials invariably take place on the night of that day. The monthly courses of the woman bring with them each time the same uncleanness lasting for seven days or more, and during this period everything on which the woman sits or lies down and everyone who touches her belonging is unclean.

When a woman is about to become a mother, no ceremony is performed for her except the wearing of glass bangles in the sixth or seventh month, when women are entertained to a feast. But soon after delivery the mother bathes in warm water if she is not very unwell, and cold water is sprinkled on the baby if it is a male. The navel is cut, the mouth is washed, and the baby is laid on her right side. To ward off evil spirits, a knife is kept under the pillow, and Adam's first wave engraved on a silver plate is hung round the child's neck. The woman in confinement is fed for the first three days with rice *kanji* and chicken broth, and from the fourth day with rice. For the first seven days the woman is made to lie on a cot, and during the same period the baby, after being bathed, has some water waved round its head and thrown at its feet. On the first day the baby is fed with the milk of another woman in the same family or of the same neighbourhood. To keep off evil spirits, ashes are thrown outside the mother's room. On the fourth day invitations are sent to her friends and relations, who, after looking at the baby and the mother, determine whether circumcision should be performed on the eighth day. They are then treated to a chewing of betel leaves and nuts. But now a days, only the circumciser visits the baby to decide whether the ceremony can be performed on that day. The White Jews do not observe this custom.

On the seventh day, when the mother goes to bed, she changes her child from her right side to her left, placing a stone in the place of the child. At dead of night the dread

spirit *Sati* comes to erase from the child's brow what God has written in its favour, and finding a stone goes away disappointed. It must be said, in this connection, that the woman is unclean for seven days after the birth of the child. On the eighth day, the child, if a son, should be circumcised. During this solemnity the mother should be quietly at home, and after this week she has still to remain for 33 days longer in the house without touching anything sacred or going to the sanctuary. If it is a female child, the seven days are extended to fourteen days and thirty-three days to sixty-six days, manifestly in accordance with the ancient belief that a female child causes the mother more labour and longer illness.

On the eighth day, after the first Sabbáth two chairs are placed one for the Prophet Elija, who is believed to be present at this ceremony, and the other for the operator who may be either the minister or somebody else acquainted with the rite. At 10 or 12 o'clock in the morning, when the guests assemble or when ten are present, the operator goes near the chair intended for the prophet, muttering some Hebrew verses. If the ceremony is to be performed at the Synagogue, the child is carried there in the arm of a woman or in a palanquin, accompanied by the relatives and female guests with music. When the party reaches the Synagogue, the child's maternal uncle takes him and the guests bless it by saying,—*Salám Alékhum*—Hail in God's name. To this the guests answer—*Alákhum Salam*—in God's name peace. The uncle then hands the child over to one of the elders who has taken Elija's chair. While the father sits covered with a veil on one chair, the operator sits on the other and circumcises the child, while the people sing *Halleluja*. Resin and milk are thrice given to quiet the baby, and the wound is healed with brandy and oil. The child is blessed by the minister and called by a name from the Old Testament. The circumciser is sometimes given a small fee, and the relations and friends are treated to a feast. The baby is adorned with silver or gold ornaments. Should the baby die before it is circumcised, the ceremony is performed on the corpse before it is buried.

The custom of circumcision is an extremely ancient one, and was in vogue among all nations which derive their descent from Abraham. The Book of Origins indicates this as prevailing among the Arabian tribes in the narrative of the circumcision of

Ishmael, and Jeremiah designated Edom, Ammon, Moab, and the Egyptians as circumcised. Herodotus, while confirming this, adds that the Ethiopians and Phœnicians and certain Syrian tribes known as Judeans, likewise practised this strange rite, which, outside those regions was nowhere to be found. The Philistines, on the other hand, were always railed at by the people of Israël as the uncircumcised. Thus according to the Old Testament and the writings of Herodotus, circumcision had its origin among an extremely ancient nation that dwelt in the land of the Nile, and in its significance it seems to have been an offering of one's flesh and blood to God. It may have served as a substitute for a sacrifice of flesh and blood at which far more was required. Among the Isralites the custom appears to have been introduced long before the time of Moses, and there is a narrative which deals with the remarkable manner in which Joshua had the nation circumcised on the banks of the Jordan. From his time the custom has been to circumcise the baby on the eighth day of his life, as the first day after the first week from his birth. There was a departure from this old custom, according to which the operation was performed as among the Muhammadans, when a boy first passed out of childhood, and began gradually to enter into his youth. This rite of circumcision acquired great significance (sacrament), and served to mark the entrance of a man into the full rights and duties of the community, and it was only suitable to connect it with the giving of a name. The child received a name on this occasion, which appears to correspond with his new birth as a member of his Jewish community.<sup>1</sup>

At present it prevails among nearly all the people of Eastern Africa, in Australia, in many islands of Melanesia and Polynesia and among Mussalmans all over the World. It is performed when a boy attains manhood *i. e.*, at the same age as that at which he is tattooed or painted or begins to dress or adorn himself. In Australia some practise circumcision, while others knock out the front teeth when youths are virile. Some are of opinion that it is done from a hygienic standpoint, that every ancestral custom may, by degrees, take a religious character, and that among the Jews

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1. (Book of Origins XVII, p 12). (The Antiquities of Israel Ewald p 89-97).

the religious character was certainly of a comparatively recent date.<sup>1</sup>

Girls are named on the fifth day or any day after one month. On the night fixed, the child is placed on a cot, or held in the mother's hand; and the minister or some elderly member of the community, placing his right hand on the child's head, repeats Hebrew verses in which the name to be given occurs. He retires, and the night is spent by the members of the family in singing and other amusements.

On the 31st day the father with his friends and relations attends the Synagogue, and going to the priest, *Rite of redemption.* says, "I present you this my first born son" and then delivers him into his hand. The priest looks at the child, asks for three rupees, and then hands him back to his father with blessings. The ceremony takes place in the house in the case of the White Jews.

Formerly, on the morning of the 33rd day, but now on the 56th day, the woman in confinement becomes purified by a bath with the recital of a Hebrew prayer. Three or four months after the mother is purified, both the mother and the child are taken to the house of her husband on an auspicious day.

Any day after three months, a child's ears are bored in three places on the lobe.

When small-pox prevails in their localities, special prayers are recited in the Synagogue for their protection.

Traditions show that polygamy and concubinage were common among the Hebrews of the patriarchal age. As an instance of the kind, it may be mentioned that Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines and that Rehoboam took eighteen wives and three score concubines. According to the Talmudic rights also this was permitted, though the number of legitimate wives was restricted to four. Though polygamy is allowed, monogamy is the rule at present. Polyandry is unknown.

Levirate is the name given to the obligation imposed by custom or law on the brother of a deceased husband to marry the latter's widow. It is mentioned twice in the Book of Genesis and was rather a moral than a legal obligation which the brother-in-law could

1. History of Human Marriage by Westermarck page 201-206.

not even refuse, but in refusing it he incurred public odium and had to submit to a degrading ceremony. It is now in vogue among these people only in the absence of a son or a daughter to the widows, as otherwise, they are at liberty to marry another after the performance of a ceremony. The levirate is undoubtedly a widespread custom. When women are regarded as property, they are inherited like other possessions. In many cases, the brother or, in default of the brother, the nearest male relation is expressly stated to be entitled to have the widow, and if he does not marry her, he has nevertheless the guardianship over her. This custom is even now in vogue among some of the low Hindu castes.

A man who was guilty of adultery received a thousand lashes, whilst the woman suffered amputation of the nose or was sometimes stoned to death. This was the old custom. At present, when a case of adultery occurs and is brought to the notice of the community, the elders meet to make the necessary enquiries. If it is proved to be true, the culprits (both the man and the woman), are ostracised, and are thenceforward deprived of the privileges of the community. They can no longer attend the Synagogue, and can have none of the ceremonies in their houses performed by the priests or ministers. (Vide Castè Government).

"The Book of Deuteronomy very accommodating to the husband authorises him to repudiate his wife 'when she finds no favour in his eyes, because he has found some uncleanness in her. He has only to put a letter of divorce in her hand, and may not take her again either if she is repudiated by another husband or becomes a widow;' (Deuteronomy, XXVI, v., 1 and 2). With much stronger reasons a man can repudiate an immodest wife. As for the wife, she could demand a divorce only for very grave causes as the following:—"If the husband is attacked by a contagious malady (Leprosy), if his occupation is too repugnant to her, if he deceives her, if he habitually illtreats her, if he refuses to contribute to her maintenance, if after ten years of marriage, his impotence has been well-established especially if the woman declares that she needs a son to sustain her in her old age."<sup>1</sup> But even then

1. Evolution of Marriage by Letourneau.

it is the husband that is reputed to have sent away his wife, and she loses her dowry.

Among the Hebrews individual property was instituted in very early times, for it is alluded to in *Inheritance.* Genesis. But the law forbade the property being equally divided among all the sons of the father or in general being cut up. The eldest son legally received a double portion which consisted of not only a share of the ancestral estate, but also a corresponding portion of the moveable wealth. It was done on the assumption that the first born was the principal heir and proper representative of the family, and as such would take on himself more of the duties of the head of the family than the other brothers, such as maintaining the widows and unmarried daughters of the family. Sons of concubines had only gifts to hope for. The same customs are still in vogue. In the absence of sons, daughters inherit their father's property all alike.

The Myukkkhasim or the Brown Jews and the Black Jews form a confederation of seven congregations, *Social Organization.* caste or tribal assemblies, called Yögams, each of which regulates all matters relating to the welfare of the community.

Among them in each village there are five office bearers—  
 1. The headman who is the senior member, 2. His assistant, the next senior man (*Segan*), 3. The *Gabai* or the treasurer, 4. *Pättakàran* or the minister, and 5. The *Samàs* or the beadle. Segans or assistants help the headman, and devise plans for bettering the Synagogue. They are chosen by the castemen from the old and respectable members of the community. One of these may be asked to resign in favour of another when necessary. The duty of the *Gabai* is to recover outstandings and to keep an account of the Synagogue fund. The *Pättakàran* or the minister is not a paid man in Cochin. He conducts divine service, blesses those who make offerings of oil or money, celebrates marriages, and performs funeral and other religious ceremonies. Any member of the community who can read Hebrew pretty fluently and lead the holiday service may be appointed minister without any remuneration.

There is a servant of the Synagogue who has to sweep and light it, to prepare the grape juice, to gather the sums



due to the Synagogue and to make them over to the treasurer. He tells people of caste meetings, of births, marriages, deaths, and excommunications and in cases tried before the headman calls out the names of the witnesses. He is paid about Rs. 5 to 8 a month.

In each village caste questions are settled by the headmar at a meeting of the senior members of the community. He is helped by a senior member who acts as a judge and the four elders called the *Ségans*. All persons present at such meetings are allowed to take part in the discussion, and if necessary, to record their dissent or petition for a new trial. In taking evidence they caution the witnesses to speak the truth, but do not exact a formal oath. The marriage covenant is in general strictly respected, and adultery is punished with fine. In aggravated cases, the agrieved party is allowed to divorce and to marry another. In the event of a difference of opinion on a particular matter, some members of each *Yogam* are invited, and their decisions are final. The White Jews also have a similar organization.

The religion of the Jews is called Judaism, and the essence of their faith is summed up in the formula that  
Religion. Jehovah is the God of Israel, and Israel is the people of Jehovah. Their religious belief is governed by Biblical and Talmudic laws. Their place of worship is called a Synagogue.

In the Jew Town of Cochin are three Synagogues, one of which is at the northern extremity, close to the palace of His Highness the Raja, and belongs to the White Jews; while the central and the southern ones are used by the Brown Jews and Black Jews respectively. The chief Synagogue or the Synagogue of the White Jews is a pretty fine edifice about 40 ft. long, and 30 ft. wide. In the inside are dry brass chandeliers holding numerous tumblers of oil for lights. The reading desk is in the centre facing the books of the Laws on the west, where they are kept in a cup-board behind a curtain, and consist of copies of the Pentateuch, most beautifully written in Hebrew characters on vellum. The flooring of the Synagogue is of blue and white China tiles. The women's gallery is screened from the body of the Synagogue, around which are benches for the men to sit on. The Jews put off their shoes before they enter the house of prayer. There is an

iron safe for the reception of alms for the poor, fixed against the outer wall of the Synagogue. There are two Synagogues in Ernakulam, one in Chennamangalam and one in Māla.

The Jews rise about 5 o'clock, and after prayer and ablutions proceed to the Synagogue for public devotions. At seven they return home, breakfast, set about the day's business, dine between 12 and 2 o'clock and again assemble for half-an-hour's prayer at 3 P. M., and 5 P. M., and resume their work until 6 P. M., when once again they attend the Synagogue for about half-an-hour. They return home, have their supper between nine and ten and retire to bed. On Friday the evening service begins at half past five and concludes at half past six, when the Talmud or some other religious work is read until bed-time. On Saturday, the morning prayer continues from 7 to 10 o'clock; in the after-noon from three to four o'clock; in the evening from six to half past six as usual, with the termination of which they close the Sabbath. They are very exemplary in their observance of this division of time, and are rigidly correct in their respect for the seventh day.

The service in the Synagogue of the White Jews is conducted by the Rabbi, who with his head covered by a *Talith* or veil thrown over his turban chants a prayer from a reading desk, which, facing to the west, is raised two steps above the floor, and is surrounded by a railing, outside of which are the seats provided for the congregation. The Rabbi generally covers his face whilst reading, but this is not done in the feast of the tabernacle. He turns towards the west, while the congregation, facing the Book of Law, continues swaying their bodies incessantly backwards and forwards and bowing towards the tabernacle, apparently with deep devotion. After a short interval of silence, the latter make a vociferous response, and incline their bodies with much show of respect towards the silver cases containing the Books of Law. The women then descend and solemnly go through the ceremony. The service is then brought to a close. The same observances take place in the Synagogues of the Brown and Black Jews also.

The Jewish *Sabbath* and feasts begin at six in the evening and lasts for the succeeding twenty-four hours, the day being computed as lasting from sunset to sunset. There are occasions of great importance observed in great

part even to the present day by every faithful Jew with scrupulous care. Before their Sabbath begins everything in the form of work for the succeeding day must be completed; food is prepared, even the tables laid, whilst all remaining ready dressed for the Sabbath when they do no manner of work. The fires in every house are extinguished; even smoking is prohibited until the evening; the Sabbath is a day of rejoicing, and prayers are said at stated periods, but the remainder of the day is spent in visiting friends, playing cards, and other games. As a rule every day is commenced by a prayer both at home and in the Synagogue, repeated about three in the evening and at sunset.

This feast which falls at the beginning of October is celebrated with much attention to the ritual. It is then more than at any other time in the year that the women appear in public. Attached to every house there is a cadjan shed, and here in the open air all take their meals. Cups of oil with cotton wicks are kept lighted at the doorway of every house, whilst opposite to the Synagogue there is a large stand filled with oil lights. On the last and most important day of the feast, the congregation assemble in the Synagogue at half past one, and the service begins at two. Persons of both sexes and of every age assemble in the house of prayer which is neatly and tastefully decorated for the occasion. Around the reading desk is a string of white flowers of the Indian jasmine. The five books of the Mosaic Law are seen in their silver cases in their tabernacles, each of which is surmounted by a golden crown; and the two externals differ in having a sort of turfet at either extremity. All the lamps inside the Synagogue are alight, and everyone is in his best gala dress. The flowing robes of the Jews in various colours are exceedingly handsome. The women also appear in their finest attire. A little after two o'clock all the male members of the congregation advance towards the Books of Law, and the three central ones are taken down from their position and carried towards the door in the midst of chants and songs of praise. At every step the members of the congregation rush forward to salute them. They are taken outside and carried round the Synagogue. All join in the singing, while those in front and around the book dance and jump about. When the Jews have left the building, the Jewesses come down from the gallery and kiss the two

The feast of the  
Tabernacle (Suka).

remaining books. Meanwhile the three other books are carried three times round the building. The Synagogue is again entered, and the two remaining ones are taken out to join in the last round. In the Syangogue of the Black Jews, rose water is sprinkled from a silver bottle over the books, but with the White Jews it is done at the doors. In commemoration of the day of the destruction of Jerusalem, they hold a very strict and solemn fast from 3-30 P. M. one day until 7 P. M. on the following. They dress themselves in deep mourning, and weep for the desolation of the present city. The Jews in their Synagogues and the Jewesses on the floor of their houses, all mourn as for some great calamity or as for the loss of some dear object. The great day of atonement of every year is kept very strictly, and the males are dressed in the same white flowing robes that will after death form their shrouds.

Passover is the first and greatest of their festivals, and is also called the first full-moon. It is the commencement of the religious year, and commemorates the birth day of the nation or the day of deliverance from Egypt, when the angel of death passed over their dwellings. The festival lasts for seven days, and every ceremony recalls the awful day of their deliverance. On the first evening they taste the bitter herb emblematic of the bitterness of their bondage. They partake of the food with their loins girded as ready for their flight; they eat only unleavened bread—the bread of slavery prepared in the hurry and confusion of departure. Every Jew must use a supplementary set of crockery and kitchen utensils. This feast occurs early in April.

This feast is celebrated in commemoration of the delivery of the law and the formation of the covenant by which the Jews became the tenants of the luxuriant soil, when the harvest was gathered and its rich abundance stored up. The gladness was to be as general as the blessing.

The new moon of the seventh month is appointed for the feast of the Trumpets. It is, in fact, the beginning of the old Hebrew year, and remained that of the Civil Year. The new moon or the first day of the lunar month is not ordained by positive precept, but recognized as a festival of established usage.

The day of Atonement is observed as a day of feast. On that day the Jews pray in the Synagogue from five in the morning till seven in the evening. Their fast begins at 5 P. M. on the day previous to each feast, and ends at 7 P. M. the next day. It is in commemoration of the scape-goat which was dedicated to the evil spirits and led forth burdened with the sins of the people to be dashed in pieces from a cliff in the dreary desert near Jericho. This is kept very strictly, and the males are dressed in the same white flowing robes that will after death form their shrouds.

The Feast of Purim commemorates the national deliverance through Esther and the Hanoukiah.

The Feast of Lights is in remembrance of the renewal of the temple worship by Judas Maccaboeus.

As there is only one almighty God, so there is only one people, the descendants of Abraham under his special protection. The God of these chosen people is their temporal as well as spiritual sovereign. He is not merely their legislator but also the administrator of their laws. Their land is his gift, held from him as their liege-lord on certain conditions. He is their leader in war, their councillor in peace. Their happiness or adversity, national as well as individual, depends solely on the maintenance or neglect of their divine institutions. Such was the common popular religion of the Jews, as it appears in their law, their history, their poetry, and their moral philosophy.

Judaism is the most exclusive of religions. It is not universal like Christianity, but tribal. It has a great distaste for the stranger at the gate, and does not send forth any missionaries among people of other creeds. It is not eager for proselytes like Christianity or Muhammadanism, and repels most of those who might be attracted by its ethical teachings. Ritual circumcision is not calculated to make Judaism attractive to christians and others.

When the death of a member of the White or Black community is expected, some of the elders of the Synagogue are sent for, who after arrival receive the confession of the dying man. Directions are also received as to the division of the property, and sometimes as to his own obsequies which take place within three hours after death. All males, friends and relations usually attend as a mark

**Funeral Customs.**

of respect to the dying man. Those closely related to him entreat him to pardon them for anything which they may have done to offend him during his life-time. As long as he is alive, the minister reads the sacred books to him and lays a copy under his pillow. When at the point of death grape juice is dropped into his mouth, his eyes are closed, and he is comforted with the promise that the children will be properly looked after. When all is over, the widow and the son rend their clothes and throw them against the husband's cot. The body is then covered with a white sheet and around it both men and women weep. A few hours after death, if the dying person is a male, a barber shaves his head, and then he is bathed in cold water. The body is then rubbed with cocoanut milk and twice washed with soap and warm water. Seven pots of water one after another are poured on it and are then dashed on the floor. The body is then removed to another room and rubbed dry. It is newly dressed and covered with a winding sheet. The Surplice or *sisid* is drawn and handkerchief and *Sabja* twig placed on the right hand. Flakes of cotton and wool are placed on the eye-lids with a handkerchief over them, and the face is then covered by the sheet. The toes are tied together with a thread. The men sit on the verandah or at some distance from the bed; and a friend or a neighbour goes to tell the relations of the death. The body is measured, and the man goes with a few labourers to dig the grave. When he comes back, others help him in making grave clothes, a pillow, a cap, and a pair of trousers.

The coffin is brought from the Synagogue and cleaned, and the body is placed in it with prayers. It is then carried to the grave yard, and with prayers is laid in the grave. Those assembled recite Hebrew verses and throw a handful of earth each and turn away. The diggers then fill the grave, and when it is full, the mourners, turning to the west, repeat prayers, and on leaving the graveyard, each plucks a handful of grass with his hand and throws it behind his back. The funeral party go to the deadman's house, sit on the verandah and, after smoking and drinking a draught of liquor, return home. In the evening near relatives bring cooked rice and dine with them. On the spot where the dead breathed his last, a mat is spread, and near by a lamp is placed with a pot of water. The first seven days are kept as days of mourning. The women mourn for seven

days, sit, dine and sleep on the mat during day and night. The members of the family neither go about nor sit on chairs, nor bathe, nor eat anything substantial nor drink liquor. The men wear no turbans and do not salute their friends. Every morning ten religiously minded men read the common and special prayers in the house of the mourner in honour of the dead. The minister reads the sacred texts for the seven days with a few people. On the morning of the seventh day after the usual service, the minister goes to the mourners' house with the men, and the chief mourner proceeds with them to the burial ground. The minister recites certain prayers in honour of the dead, and then the mourners turn their backs on the grave, repeat prayers and return home. At the mourner's house the *Tora* is read. Guests are not invited; all those who hear the *Tora* come unasked and bless the food and repeat prayer. They are treated to a feast.

Then every Saturday for eleven months some prayers for the dead are recited, and on a Wednesday of the eleventh month, a ceremony is performed and the Jews are treated to a feast. In the third and twelfth month also, a feast is given to a large number of their fellow men when both the *Tora* and Hebrew prayers are read. On the anniversary day of death a commemorative rite is performed with a feast to a few members of the community.

The Jews originally had no special turn for trading.

Occupation. They were at first herdsmen, tillers of the soil, and handicraftsmen of the simplest sort.

But in the countless lands into which they were carried by the dispersion they were often forced to follow quite other paths than the old. The prejudice of the nations among whom they settled forbade to them the ownership of lands and the following of handicrafts. Commerce thus became to them the easiest and the most natural resource. They practised it, and their dexterity increased. The success they achieved was one which their ancestors did not possess. This awakened trading spirit favoured the dispersion, and this in turn stimulated the former, so that the Jews were scattered everywhere, and everywhere they became merchants, a profession in which, it is said, "they were honourably distinguished".<sup>1</sup> The proverb as rich as a Jew illustrates their skillfulness.

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1. The Jews (page, 136—137.)

In Cochin they have always been an industrious people, and have no hesitation to enter any profession to gain an honest livelihood. Trade was the occupation in which they played an important part on the West Coast during the days of the Portuguese and the Dutch. They are even now mostly following the same profession. The Black Jews who are comparatively poorer are petty shop-keepers, hawkers, book-binders, dealers in poultry, fish, rice and other commodities. The Bene Israels of Bombay have begun to move with the times by entering into every walk of life. Their brethren in these parts are very far behind. The former are progressing fast in modern education ; many among them are artisans, and contractors, while some occupy posts in the services of Government, railways, municipalities, mercantile companies, etc. The members of the Cochin community are not sufficiently advanced to fill such posts. They are a backward community in point of education , but thrive fairly as merchants, middlemen, money lenders and the like.

The only available test of the education of a people is the proportion of persons who can read and write. In this respect the Jews are a backward community. Very few of their boys and girls avail themselves of the facilities afforded them in the primary and the secondary schools of the State. Being an isolated and orthodox community, they, like the Jonakan Mappillas, consider it a prime necessity for their children to study Hebrew in order to understand the elements of their religion. The children are therefore taught Hebrew in a building close to the Synagogue. Of late, a small number of their girls are found attending the local primary school, where they learn a little of the vernacular and other subjects taught therein. Some are found reading in the higher classes of the College at Ernakulam.

The Jews have no vernacular of their own. Hebrew is to the Jews as Sanskrit is to the Brahmans. But in fact they speak the language of the people around them. The members of the community can speak Malayalam, but very few can read and write it.

According to the last Census the Jews of Cochin number 1,175, as against 1,137 in 1901. Of these 192 are White Jews and the rest 983 Black. The White Jews are confined to Jew Town,

Population.



while the Black Jews are found there as well as in Ernakulam, Chennamangalam and Mala. During the last half century and more, their numbers have been steadily decreasing. Many young men among them go to foreign places in search of suitable work, and settle themselves there after earning a fortune. Many, I am informed, are now in Bombay, Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapur, Honkong, and other places. Several women marry at a comparatively advanced age for want of suitable husbands.

The ordinary dietary of the Jews is rice and curry, either vegetable or meat. They breakfast between 8 and 9, dine between 12 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and their supper is at 8 P. M. They are very strict in the observance of the dietary laws. They subject every carcass to a thorough examination by an expert, who condemns meat that is unfit for their consumption. Special attention is paid to the condition of the viscera, particularly the lungs, pleura, liver and spleen. "Those animals whose lungs present any adhesion to the thoracic walls or between the lobes of the lungs or in which small nodules are discovered scattered over the surface of the lungs, are pronounced unfit for human consumption."<sup>1</sup> It is said that bovine tuberculosis is thus prevented from gaining a foothold among the children of Israel. The dietary laws by no means prevent social intercourse between the Jews and their neighbours of different faith, for, they are not limited to the prohibition of pork and to the prescription of a special method of slaughter, and of meat inspections with a view to prevent diseases.<sup>2</sup> Some speak as if Moses had been a great sanitary reformer, the ancient precursor of modern teachers of hygiene. It is very probable, however, that these rules had their origin much before the time of Moses, and are in fact the survivals of the system of Totemism which existed among the primitive Hebrews. As members of the Totem clans, they tabooed animals which they worshipped (totems). The list of forbidden animals is given in Leviticus XI and Deuteronomy XV, and this was afterwards codified with the object of keeping the Jews isolated from the heathen. They cannot eat game, nor some species of fish. These laws are observed by the Jews in the

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<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup>. *The Jews Contemporary Science series* pages 291, 535.

State, though there is a tendency for them to be disregarded in other countries.

The Jews wear a long tunic of rich colour, over it a waistcoat buttoned up to the neck and full white trousers, with a skull cap, and sometimes a turban when they go to the Synagogue. While at home, they are often seen with a red coloured loin cloth, a shirt, and a skull cap. Some among the White Jews appear in European costume. The Black Jews wear a similar loin cloth with a shirt and a skull cap like the Jonakan Mappillas. They use wooden sandals. Their heads are shaved at an early age, but leave a lock of hair just in front and above the ears. The males use no ornaments of any kind except a ring or two for the ring finger.

The Jewesses wear a red coloured loin cloth and a jacket to cover their breast. The former is fastened round by a gold or silver belt, from which a bunch of keys is sometimes suspended. Their dress is simple, but, for grand occasions, they have rich costumes. They cover their heads with a veil which falls over their shoulders as low as their waist. They wear various kinds of gold necklaces, some of which are made of venetian sequins. Owing to some dispute between the two communities, Black Jewesses adopted the Bagdad dress, which consisted of a scanty shirt of rich cloth, satin or muslin, made in one piece from the neck to the ankles, gathered in behind, fastened up in front and open from the throat nearly as far down as the waist, showing a white handkerchief or stomacher.

The hair on the head is never parted and smoothened with oil. It is always untidy. Elderly married women do not care much for their personal appearance. Married women after the birth of their second child generally leave off their jewels and wear a plain dress. In mourning they wear a white dress with a black border, and white or black ornaments. After marriage, they always cover their heads with a handkerchief and on grand occasions with a little gold coloured cap. In the Synagogue, the women have their heads covered by a long muslin or net-veil.

It is said that the Jews, in spite of their being only a small fraction of civilized humanity, have succeeded in maintaining the purity of their race for the last 4,000 years. "During the last 18 centuries of dispersion among all the nations of the habitable globe, among

Dress and other ornaments.

Purity of the Race.

nearly all the races of the mankind, they are allowed to have refrained from intermarriages outside of their pale and thus maintain the purity of the breed of Israel to an extent unknown among any other ethnic groups of people"<sup>1</sup>. The result is, that the Jews of to-day present a uniform physical type, wherever they may be encountered. Furthermore, it has been repeatedly asserted by anthropologists that the race portraits portrayed on the ancient Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian monuments, which have recently come to light, show faces of Jews which bear a striking resemblance to the faces met with to day in Warsaw, Frankfort, Whitechapel, London and in the Cochin Town. Notwithstanding all the vicissitudes which they have been subjected to for 4,000 years, it is said that the type of the ancient Hebrew survives to-day in the modern Jews wherever they may be found."

European anthropologists have given the Jews an unusual amount of attention. Measurements have been taken of them in various parts of the world in order to ascertain whether the alleged uniformity of physical type can be proved by scientific tests. Demographers and sociologists have studied them in their respective spheres and measurements, and photographs of the race-types of Jews in many parts of Europe, and in some parts of Asia and Africa are all now available for a close study of their racial characteristics.

According to J. Coleman the most constantly reappearing racial traits are the following:—"The colour of the skin, hair, and eyes, the form of the skull and face, the relative length of the limbs, and within certain limits the height or stature. These traits are constant in a race, and depend only on heredity and are not known to be influenced by external conditions. There are also the secondary or fluctuating racial traits, which depend greatly on the social and physical environments, and these, according to the same author, are the amount of fat on the body, the development of the muscular system, the strength of the skeleton and, to a certain extent, stature. All these are known to increase in well-nourished individuals"<sup>2</sup>.

The investigations of Professor Boas, a distinguished American anthropologist have shown that the crossing of two races has produced neither any new type nor middle types, but

1. *The Jews Contemporary Science series*, pages 21-23.

2. *The Jews Contemporary Science series*, pages 24-25.

only the half breeds which show reversion to one of the parent's types. This theory of the stability and persistence of the racial characters has not been entirely accepted by all anthropologists. Many, on the other hand, insist that social environments have something to do with the change of physical traits, and produce a change in the organism. With the concomitant changes in the somatic traits, the followers of this theory of environment mention the Jews as a good example of a race which has maintained itself in absolute purity of blood, showing physical differences in different countries. The blond Jews of North Europe, the brunettes in the south, the Black Jews of the Malabar Coast, the Negro Jews of Abyssinia and Mongolian Jews of China, are thus supposed to be not a product of race fusion, but solely the result of the climate, altitude, nourishments, etc. This conclusion has been proved to be erroneous. From the measurements of the stature, the headform, the nose and other organs of the Jews in various parts of the world, as also the types of pigmentation, anthropologists have arrived at the conclusion that there are at present among the Jews various types which are the result of race fusion. Thus in countries where the population is predominantly blond, the Jews formed by fusion acquire blond elements, where the bulk of the population is brunette, as in the Caucauses, they do not acquire anything else but brunette traits. On the same principle the Black Jews in India and on the Malabar coast are of undoubtedly Hindu derivation. The Falasha Jews in Abyssinia are also like the Jews of Cochin, among whom there is an infusion of foreign blood, chiefly Negroid. These two classes of Jews afford excellent examples of the fact that the Jews have made proselytes after their dispersion among nations and that they have incorporated into their community foreign elements at various times. Similar cases are also recorded in ancient times in the history of the Jews in the various parts of Europe, *e. g.*, Gaul, Spain, Italy and Hungary. In India, especially in Cochin, the infusion of native blood is so great among the Black Jews that to-day after many generations they cannot be recognised. Viewed therefore from an anthropological standpoint, the question of the uniformity of the Jewish race loses its significance.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Jews Contemporary Science series, page 508

**Physical Characters.** *Stature:*— It is said that the Jews according to the Bible were a "short race of people", and the medium height of the present Jewish population of Europe, according to Paul Topinard and

Deniker, is about 165 cms. From this it may be inferred that the Jews of to-day are still short of stature. From the measurements of the Black Jews recently taken by me it is found that the average height is 164.1 cms. The Jewesses are still shorter in stature than the Jews. This is partly attributed to the influence of environments such sedentary habits, the indoor occupations of many, the wretched social, economic and sanitary conditions they are now subject to, and partly to certain ethnic factors. Their average cephalic index is 77.1 and the average nasal index is 68.6. Various types of nose, straight, aquiline, or hooked, flat and broad, were also met with among them in the course of my investigations. A few instances of erythrism or red hair are met with among some of the White Jews.

**Types of Pigmentation.** The physical type of the White Jews is said to be the same as that of the European Jews. Although they have been living in these parts for several centuries, they appear to have been unaffected by external environments. They are of white complexion and, when contrasted with that of the natives, their whiteness is accentuated and is somewhat of the nature of sickly pallor. "Their women when young are said to have mostly a Spanish face, though in a few cases the pale coloured hair and little brown or blue eyes would indicate the idea of a northern parentage."<sup>1</sup> While the Jew seems to improve in appearance as years roll on, the Jewess fades at 30. "The children look almost leprously white, so do the eyes become habituated to dark skin. This retention of complexion and features for so many centuries is truly astonishing".<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps partly owing to the absence of any admixture of native blood in their veins and partly owing to fresh arrivals from Europe to renew their blood.

The hair and beard are mostly black, but blond hair, with grey and blue eyes, is also met with among a few of them. The hair is of abundant growth, somewhat curly or wavy. The Jewish cast of face is very noticeable among the White Jews.

<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup>. Land of the Perumal, pages 346 and 48.

There are, among them, two distinct types, namely, Ashkenazim (German and Polish Jews) and Sepharadim (Spanish Jews).

The Black Jews including the brown section, on the other hand, are of a different type. The colour of their skin is of various shades ranging from fair, to a very small extent, like the White Jews, to brown and dark, like that of the members of other low castes, among whom they live. They have, however, the Jewish physiognomy which would incline one to believe that they are of a mixed Jewish blood.

The colour of the Jews of Cochin is a subject which has engaged the attention of a large number of writers. Benjamin Tudela in 1167 speaks of there having been only about "100 Jews who are of black colour". Manasseh, Bene Israel, in 1565, while addressing Cromwell, speaks of them as tawny. The earliest exponent of a threefold division based on the white, brown and the black colours of the Jews was the Rev. T. Whitehouse in an article in the *Evening hours* for 1873, and this classification recognizes the existence of the Myukkkhasim or 'those of lineage' as a distinguished community. Following the interpretation of this threefold division, Dr. Burnell, Dr. Day, Professor Milne Rae and others state that the Myukkkhasim or the Brown Jews are the offspring of the White Jews and those of converts from the low-caste natives. The Brown Jews resent this view and consider themselves to be the descendants of the ancient Jews, and treat the Black Jews as socially inferior to them because of their descent from the old converts or slaves. At the same time, they regard the White Jews as late comers. Nevertheless the two sections, the brown and the black, are now physically merged into one community, the members of which are of all shades of complexion.

With regard to the question of priority of settlement, anti-quarians are again divided in their views. According to Dr. Buchanan, the White Jews of Cochin are later settlers than the Black Jews. They had only the Bible written on parchment and of modern appearance in their Synagogue, and he managed to get from the Black Jews much older manuscripts written on parchments, goat's skin and cotton paper. Regarding the Black Jews, he says, "It is only necessary to look to their countenance to be satisfied that their ancestors must have arrived in India many ages before the White Jews. Their Hindu complexion and their very imperfect resemblance

to the European Jews indicate that they have been detached from the parent stock in Judea many ages before the Jews in the West, and that there have been marriages not Israelitish." Professor Wilson of Bombay adds that the family names, such as David Castle (David the Castilian), go to prove that some among them are the descendants of the Jews of Spain, probably of those driven from that country during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella. Other surnames such as Hallegua, Ashkanazy, Zackai, Rabbi, Kodar, Kohen, Sargon, Asshoori, and Bagdadi refer to the countries of Europe and Asia from which their ancestors came at various times, mostly owing to the fear of persecutions at home. The real ancient Jews, adds the same Professor, are the Black Jews, the descendants probably of Judea Arabians and Indian Proselytes.

The writer of the article on Cochin in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* says that of the two classes the fair or White Jews are of a recent settlement, while the Black Jews, who have been supposed by some to be Hindu converts, are probably an earlier race of Jews from Palestine.

In regard to the claim of the Black Jews as being the only genuine Jews, a competent Jew David de Beth Hillel, who visited Cochin in 1832, opined that they are probably the descendants of the Israelites who came to India but did not return to the land of their birth and that they did not deserve to be called Black Jews, because they were not so dark coloured as they were represented to be.

The above remarks recall another tradition current among the Black Jews that they are the descendants of the Jews who were driven out of the land of Israel 13 years before the destruction of the first temple built by Solomon, and that they came first either to Calicut or Palur near Chavakkad, whence they emigrated to Cranganore.

In this connection, it may not be out of place to refer to some of the arguments put forward by the Myukkasim among the Black Jews in support of the claims for priority, and they are—1. The probability of the granting of the copper-plate charter to one Joseph Rabban, who, according to the record-book of the two communities, came from Yemen in Arabia and could not be one of the White Jews. 2. The independent origin of the two communities, as observed in the ritual and

religious observances, namely, the difference in the collection of hymns and songs for use at the feasts of the tabernacle and other occasions, in spite of the same liturgy. 3. The construction of the two Synagogues in 1344 A. D. and 1586 A. D. *i. e.*, 567 and 325 years ago, and that of the White Jews in 1666 *i. e.*, 245 years ago. 4. The existence of a tomb stone of the Black Jews 600 years old and that of the White Jews 200 years only. 5. The designation of the White Jews as *Paradésis* (foreigners) in public accounts and State records and that of the Black Jews as natives. 6. The opinion of the Great Rabbi of Jerusalem and of David de Beth Hillel about the Black Jews as true members of the "seed of Israel". 7. Enjoyment by the present Black Jews of the privileges mentioned in the charter.<sup>1</sup>

The views of the various writers above referred to and the evidence of local facts, do not seem to support the contention of the White Jews, that the Black Jews do not belong to the Israelitish community. They do not at the same time possess any authentic records to establish their contention. In the absence of any correct data to substantiate their statement, it may be rightly inferred that the dark coloured brethren must have been the descendants of the earliest immigrants and that there has been considerable infusion of Indian blood in their veins either by intermarriages with women of the low caste, proselytism or by slavery or all combined. It cannot, at the same time, be admitted that the White Jews are free from any admixture of foreign blood, for some show clearly that there is.

There were persecutions of these people all over Europe, and many leaving their native homes were scattered in various parts of the earth, and very probably some might have come and settled in Cranganore amongst their co-religionists, the so called Black Jews, who might have welcomed the new comers and shared with them the high privileges they were long enjoying. The White Jews, when left to themselves, became by their commercial propensities financially more prosperous and wielded more influence with the European nations. But subsequently the Black Jews claimed equality with them and the right of intermarriage; and the White community, owing to the superiority of colour and purity of descent, might have held aloof, and this gave rise to constant misunderstandings and dissensions among them.

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1. The Jews in India and the Far East p. 83-86.



The social conditions of the Jews are very much governed by their religion, the Sabbath and dietary laws. Very seldom can they eat with their Christian or Muhammadan neighbours nor can they share their joys and sorrows. They take rest when others are working, and work, when others enjoy rest. They are rich in all the virtues, devout yet tolerant and strong in their reliance on Faith, Hope and more specially Charity. The cause of their social separation can be sought in the centuries of their oppression in Europe and other countries. Isolation, which has been called by Darwin the corner stone of breeders, is more operative in moulding the Jews as we meet them to day. They still look forward to the Messiah, a heaven-sent leader, under whose guidance they are to attain splendour and the supremacy which they claim to be theirs.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS.

The Syrian Christians, who form the large majority of Christians in Cochin and Travancore are the representatives of the ancient oriental church on the West Coast of Southern India. They are generally called St. Thomas Christians or Nazarene Mappillas. In the last Census they numbered 102,834, 52,771 being males and 50,063 females.

The introduction of Christianity into Malabar and the subsequent history of the Christian Church, like the early history of the Cochin Jews, are buried in obscurity, and even the available information is also very complicated. A short account of it is given below. According to the traditions current among these people and implicitly believed by them, the introduction of Christianity and the establishment of the Original Church in Malabar in the year 52 A. D. are ascribed to the Apostle St. Thomas, who landed at Cranganore, or Musiris, converted many Brahmans and others, ordained two Presbyters, and also founded seven churches namely, Kottakayil, Kothamangalam, Niranam, Chayil, Quilon, Kodungallur (Cranganore) and Palur, the first six being in Travancore and Cochin, and the seventh in Chavakkad in South Malabar. He also founded eight Archbishopsrics, of which Malabar was one.

The Apostle after his labours in these territories went to Mailapur and thence to China, and on his return to the former place, suffered martyrdom or met with an accidental death on St. Thomas Mount. His grave is shown in the present Roman Catholic Cathedral at St. Thome, and at this little Mount is a cave with a Cross and Pahlavi inscription, where he is said to have concealed himself for protection against his enemies. It is also said that, after the death of the clergy ordained by St. Thomas, the church fell into evil ways, and some of the

Origin and early  
History of the Chris-  
tian Church in Ma-  
labar.

converts, either afraid of persecution or influenced by persuasion or advice, returned to Hinduism. This apostacy is supposed to be due to the revival of the Sivite worship advocated by the celebrated Hindu preacher Manikka Vachakar.<sup>1</sup>

There is nothing inherently improbable in the foregoing traditional account, which ascribes to an apostolic origin to the Malabar Church, since there was considerable trade between Cranganore and the Roman Empire in the early centuries of the Christian era. It is generally discredited owing to the absence of any reliable evidence to support it. The *Acta Thomae* (3rd century A. D.) gives the earliest detailed account of St. Thomas' Apostolic labours, and connects his mission with the king Gondophares, whom coins prove as having been an Indo-Parthian king with his capital at Kabul, and thus makes no reference to his journey to Southern India. Eusebius (264-340) makes St. Thomas the evangelist of Parthia. Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre, at the end of the 3rd century, says that he preached to the Parthians, Medes and Persians, and died at Calamina,<sup>2</sup> a place in India mentioned by Nearchus, but is never properly identified.<sup>3</sup> Rufinus in 371 A. D. says that the bones of St. Thomas were brought to Edessa from India which is evidently India Minor—the country west of the India known to medieval geographers. In remembrance of this a feast called *Dukrāna* is celebrated by the Romo-Syrians and Jacobites of Malabar on the 3rd July of every year as a day of obligation. If Parthia and India Minor had been the scenes of the Apostle's labours, there would not have been the least likelihood of his having landed at Cranganore for the propagation of the Christian faith. Nevertheless, the tradition of Apostolic origin handed down from generation to generation is even now tenaciously clung to by the zealous Christians of these parts.

In the Council of Nice held in 325 A. D., the Christian interests in India were represented by Johannes, the Metropolitan of Persia and of Great India, and this proves the existence of Christianity during the fourth century. Some

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1. The Indian Christians of St. Thomas, page 10.

2. Calamina is said to be another form of Galmona a Syriac word meaning a little Mount (St. Thomas Mount).

3. Syrian Church in India, page 59.

critics, on the other hand, argue that India above referred to is not the Peninsular India but Parthia, Ethiopia, and Arabia, *i. e.*, countries outside India. This Council was held to discuss sectarian differences, to define the jurisdiction of the various ecclesiastical heads and to frame a code of general dogmas, doctrines, and rituals, and appointed four Patriarchs—Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch. Jerusalem was constituted a fifth Patriarchate under Antioch; and the Catholicos of Bagdad, likewise subject to Antioch, was invested with the authority of managing the affairs of the Eastern Churches. Thus the Patriarch of Antioch was given the jurisdiction over the Indian Churches as early as the fourth century A. D.

There is also indisputable evidence to the existence of the Christians in Malabar afforded by Cosmas Indicopleustes<sup>1</sup>, a Nestorian Christian, who going to Ceylon in the sixth century reported that there were churches there "and at Male (Malabar) where pepper grows, and at Kalliyana (Quilon) there is a Bishop usually ordained in Persia" It is very probable that the church was founded in the fifth century by Nestorian Missionaries from Babylon; for, in spite of the decision of the Council of Ephesus in 431 A. D., the Nestorians flourished in the East, and the Patriarch of Babylon sent Missionaries as far as Tibet and China between the sixth and eleventh centuries.

Furthuss Thomas Cana, a Nestorian merchant<sup>2</sup>, is said to have arrived at Cranganore in the eighth or ninth century with a colony of 400 Christians from Bagdad, Nineveh and Jerusalem, including several priests, deacons and a bishop named Joseph of Edessa. He is said to have built a church in Mahadevapattanam and followed Syrian Liturgy. It is said that he married two native wives—Nayar and Mukkuvan—and that the descendants of their offspring are respectively known as Northerners (Vadakkumbhagakkars) and Southerners (Thekkumbhagakkars) of the present day.<sup>3</sup> "Another version regarding the division into two sections is that the Southerners were

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1. It is said that an anonymous Bishop was ordained in Malabar and that no mention is made of any heresy.

2. It is said that he was not a Nestorian merchant, but an Aramian merchant of Jerusalem.

3. Madras District Gazetteers, Malabar and Angingoo, page 202.

the new immigrants brought by Thomas Cana and settled in the South street in Cranganore, while the Northerners were the old indigenous Christians who had resided in the North street. "The Southerners are fairer in complexion and more handsome than the Northerners. They are endogamous, and observe more of the Hindu customs".<sup>1</sup>

The Christians of Malabar seem to have attained high social and commercial importance, which is testified to by the privileges specified in the copper plate grants given to them by kings Veera Raghava Chakravarthi and Sthānu Ravi Gupta. These are still preserved in Kottayam. The first of these is said to have been given to Thomas Cana, though there is nothing to connect it with him. The dates assigned to these grants are 774 and 824 A. D. respectively. But recent researches on both paleographical and astrological grounds assign them to the 13th or 14th century. The privileges conferred on these grants were among those enjoyed by the subordinate local chiefs and the Veera Raghava's grant makes the donee the sovereign merchant of Kerala.<sup>2</sup> "They are said to have attained a high position during these early centuries, and this is corroborated by the embassy of Alfred in 833 A. D. to the shrine of St. Thomas in India which returned with a rich load of spices and pepper".

Very little of the history of the Malabar Church is known for six centuries prior to the advent of the Portuguese. The church appears to have been more or less in connection with one of the Eastern Patriarchs, Nestorian or Jacobite, who sent Bishops from time to time. They were also, at times, managed without any Bishops. Marco Polo, who visited the coast in the 13th century, mentions the prevalence of Nestorianism among the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar as well as the legends regarding the death of the saint in India. In the next century three Latin Missionaries—Friar Jordanus, John of Monte Corvina, and John de Marignote—visited Malabar and made converts. In fact, until the arrival of the Portuguese in Malabar, the Christians belonged to the Nestorian Church.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Travancore Manual, page 127. Madras District Gazetteers Malabar and Anjingo, page 203.

2. Cochin State Manual, page 219.

3. The Cochin State Manual, page 19.

When the Portuguese came to India, they were glad to welcome the Syrians as their brother Christians, and never thought of interfering with their doctrines; but they had soon to change their attitude towards them. These Syrian Christians had their mother Church at Babylon with their Patriarch at Mosul in Asia Minor, and knew nothing of Papal supremacy. They were Nestorians *i. e.*, followers of Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople, who was condemned by the general Council of Ephesus 431 A. D., for the assertion that Jesus was both God and Man, and that he became God only at his baptism; while the accepted faith was that he was God even in the womb of his mother.

The Nestorian faith was shocking to the Portuguese, who, after the conquest of territories and establishment of their capital or head quarter at Goa, soon entered on a policy of conversion and resolved to prevent the Syrian Christians from communion with the eastern Patriarch. Franciscan and Dominican Friars and Jesuits all conjointly worked to place the Malabar Church under the authority of Rome. They established the Inquisition at Goa in 1560, and a Jesuit Church and Seminary were founded at Vaippacotta near Cranganore in 1584, and finally at the Synod of Diamper (Udayamperur) in 1590 Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, with the aid of the Inquisition succeeded in particularly inducing the whole of the Syrian Church to acknowledge the Papal supremacy, and confirm to the Latin doctrine and ritual by disowning "the heresies and false doctrines sown among them and introduced by schismatical prelates and Nestorian heretics that governed them, under the obedience of the Patriarch of Babylon".<sup>1</sup> They were thus incorporated with the Roman Catholic converts of the Jesuits in one community under the authority of the Archbishop of Goa, who, with a view to ensure success, ordained many new clergy from among the Syrians, altered

1. Madras District Gazetteers Malabar and Anjingo, page 203-204.

At the Synod of Diamper they were accused of the following practices and opinions—That they had married wives, that they owned, but two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's supper, that they neither invoked saints nor worshipped images, nor believed in purgatory, that they had no other orders of dignity in the church than bishop, priest, or deacon. Asiatic Researches by Claudius Buchanan.

their Church Service Books to suit the Roman doctrines and burned their invaluable manuscripts of theology and church history. After two months' hard work in visiting and organizing, he returned to Goa, but the government of the Jesuit Archbishop which lasted for half a century was very much disliked by a large majority of the Syrian Christians, who applied to the Patriarchs of Babylon and Antioch for a Bishop. A man named Ahatāla was accordingly sent from Antioch, but was intercepted by the Portuguese, who took him to Goa, and shipped him off to Europe. This provoked a large body of the Syrian Christians, who under the Archdeacon Thomas met at the church of Coonen Cross at Mattanchery in 1653 and renounced their allegiance to Rome. It is said that out of 400,000 persons only 400 adhered to the Portuguese Jesuit Archbishop. This separation led to the two existing divisions, namely, *Pashayakūru*, (those who adhered to the Romish Church according to the Synod of Diamper) and the *Puthankūru* (Jacobite Syrians who, after the oath at Coonen Cross, got a Bishop Mar Gregory from Antioch and now follow the Jacobite ritual).

After the failure of the Jesuits, Carmalites were sent for the conversion of the Syrians to the Romish Church, and they succeeded in winning them back to a very considerable extent under Father Joseph, whom the Pope appointed in 1659, without the knowledge of the King of Portugal, as Vicar Apostolic of Malabar. For the next two hundred years the Carmalite Vicars Apostolic continued to govern the two communities, the Romo-Latin and Romo-Syrian communities in Malabar, but the King of Portugal in virtue of his *Jus Patronale* appointed Archbishops of Cranganore and Bishops of Cochin whose jurisdiction was confined to the actual limit of the Portuguese territories, and which ceased to exist with the rise of the Dutch power.

With the British supremacy, the struggle between the Portuguese Jesuit Archbishops of Cranganore and the Carmalite Vicars Apostolic of Verapoly broke out again, and this was brought to an end by the Papal Bull *Multa Praclare* of 1838, which abolished the Sees of Cranganore and Cochin and placed them under the authority of the Archbishop of Verapoly. Matters were finally settled by the Concordat of

1886, which defined the limits of the jurisdiction of the rival priests, and the Romo-Syrian community was placed under the government of the Archbishop of Verapoly. In 1877, an assistant to him was appointed, and he had charge of the Romo-Syrians; but he was in 1887 replaced by two European Vicars Apostolic, and these again were in 1896 replaced by three Native Syrian priests who were consecrated as Vicars Apostolic of *Trichur, Ernakulam and Chengannassery*. Owing to the disputes between the Northists (Northerners) and Southists (Southerners) in Travancore in point of social status, a new bishopric was created at Chengannassery, and the former Bishop has his headquarters at Kottayam.

By the influence of the Portuguese Missionaries, many Hindus especially of low castes became converts to the Latin Church, and at the beginning of the 19th century they were socially divided into the three distinct communities, namely, Ezhunoottikars (the 700), the Anjoottikars (the 500), and Munnoottikars (the 300), the first two of which are ever trying to assert their superiority in status over each other. The origin and early history of these communities are very much disputed; and special vernacular books and pamphlets are published with accounts of their origin and social status. They do not admit that they were recent converts, but claim to be the descendants of St. Thomas Christians with subsequent additions from low Hindu castes.

These accounts appear mostly to be cooked up to serve their own purpose, and the names denoting each community are being disclaimed by the members thereof.

There are certain letters of St. Francis Xavier and some Vatican documents, which have been recently cited by some of the Romo-Syrian clergy in Travancore and Cochin, in support of a contention that their ancestors, the Syrian Christians on this coast, were not Nestorian heretics, but were Chaldeans of an Oriental rite in communion with Rome and holding the Catholic faith. They contend that the Portuguese did not convert them from any heresy but only made them submit to the jurisdiction of the Bishops of the Latin rite, having cut off their relation with the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Babylon. They saw that

Romo-Latinites or  
Latinars.

The Syrian Church  
not Nestorian.



the saints were notoriously keen in detecting heresy, and they contended that the aged Bishop described by St. Francis as serving God for forty-five years in this country could not have been a heretic and also that the Syrian Christians for whom St. Francis asked indulgences could not have been in schism. Further it is pointed out that the Portuguese garrison at Cananore heard the Syrian Mass of the Bishops, and that the Syrian Christians at Quilon paid money to Marignoli as the Pope's legate. They now deny the credit of the Portuguese in the conversion of the Syrian Christians to the Roman Catholic faith; and it is said that the word Nestorian is very loosely used by the Portuguese historians and often denotes only orientals, and not necessarily heretics. But all Protestant writers unanimously agree in describing them as Nestorian in their doctrines, (1. 2.)

The Jacobite Syrians who separated from the Roman  
 Jacobite Syrians. Syrians chose as their Bishop Mar Thomas who was, according to tradition, one of the descendants of the Brahman converts of St. Thomas, and was consecrated in 1665 by Mar Gregory, who was sent out by the Patriarch of Antioch. They adopted views quite opposed to their own, namely, "that the divine and human natures in our Lord were so united that there was but one nature, *i.e.*, the Godhead and manhood mingled like wine and water." Here they are said to have been guilty of having confounded the "Essence or Being or Natures" of Christ." Hence they are called Monophysites "or those who held only one nature" or Jacobites.<sup>3</sup> This change was made more easily owing to the destruction of Nestorian books at and after the Synod in 1599. This division of the church continued to acknowledge the supremacy of Antioch, and its history is uneventful till the commencement of the 19th century, when the Church Missionary Society came on the field and became friendly with it on the advice of Dr. Claudius Buchanan and Colonel Munro the British Resident. The Mission established a College for the instruction of the Syrian priests and deacons under the management of Rev. Fenn. The scriptures were translated. Village schools were started. All these were

1. History of Christianity in Travancore, pages 28—30.

2. The Orthodoxy of St. Thomas Christians, pages 5—55.

3. Gibbon's Decline and Fall, Vol. IV, Chapter XLVII (11).

done with the approval of the Méttran, but the conservative party among them began to fear that the Syrian Church would be brought under Protestant control.

In 1825, some of them appealed to the Patriarch of Antioch, and Mar Athanésius was sent out to replace Mar Dionysius, who was believed to be too much inclined to Protestantism. The dispute was settled finally in 1840 by the withdrawal of the Church Missionary Society from all connection, with the Syrian Church. Since then, their work for the Syrians was completely closed, but there were among them some who, having imbibed a love for the Missionaries, appreciated their teachings and expositions of the Holy Scriptures and the use of prayer in the vernacular. Fortunately for them, there was in the Kottayam College a pious *Kattunâr* or priest known as Abraham, who sympathising with the spiritual aims of the Missionaries returned to his parish at *Mârâmannu*, and resolved to carry out the principles which lie at the root of all religious reforms by conducting the worship of God and preaching in a tongue understood by the people. Among the changes he introduced in his own parish were the restoration of the Holy Communion in both kinds, communicating the people during service, protest against Masses performed for money and abolition of prayers to the Saints.<sup>1</sup> Malpan Abraham thus became the Wycliff of the Syrian Church of Malabar, and the reform movement, having been started, gained more and more sympathisers. The clergy began to preach to the people in Malayalam, and scriptures were read in their families. The students of the Kottayam College and elsewhere were awakened by the reformed Christianity and were inspired with admiration for its life and liberty. The movement went on prospering after the death of Abraham under his nephew Mathew, who became Metropolitan of the Syrian Church in Travancore and Cochin and was as such recognized by the British Resident and the rulers of the two Native States. Before his death he consecrated to be his suffragan his cousin Mar Thomas Athanesius, who succeeded to the Episcopal Throne in 1877, and was loyally honoured by the reforming clergy and laity. The Jacobite Syrians were thus split up into two parties, one of which was the Vava's party under Mar Dionysius consecrated by the Jacobite Patriarch, who led those that were opposed to the reformation; and the

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1. The Indian Christians of St. Thomas, page 30.

other (Melran's party) under Mar Mathew Athanesius who headed the reform party. The two factions were quite inimical to each other, struggled for mastery by a protracted litigation in the High Court of Travancore and the Chief Court of Cochin, and the dispute was settled by a decision in favour of the non-reforming party.

Besides the three divisions above mentioned, there is a small party of Chaldean or Nestorian Syrians, who seceded from the Romo-Syrians in 1856 owing to the refusal of the Archbishop of Verapoly to ordain candidates for holy orders, who had been trained by native Malpans in the smaller Seminaries. They are now presided over by a Bishop ordained by the Patriarch of Babylon. They are only found in and around Trichur.

There remains another branch of the present Jacobite Syrian sect, in which the Bishops ordained their own successors without recognising the necessity of ordination by the Patriarch of Antioch. The members of this sect are found in Chavakkad. They were the adherents of the Bishops of Anur or Thoshiyur near Chavakkad, a small See founded in the eighteenth century by Mar Cyril, who quarrelling with the Jacobite Bishop Mar Thomas got himself consecrated by one of the three Bishops sent out by the Patriarch of Antioch to validate the consecration of Mar Thomas.

The Church Missionary Society commenced their work at Trichur in 1842, and then at Kunnankulam, in 1854. Each station has its outstations, of which Trichur has eleven and Kunnankulam nine. Most of these outstations are in Cochin and a few in the British territory.

The Christians in Cochin belong to various denominations as shown below :—

1. Roman Catholics including those who perform the ceremonies of the Church in Latin and in Syriac.
2. Jacobite Syrians including the reformed Syrians or St. Thomas Syrians.
3. Chaldean Syrians.
4. Protestants.

With the exception of the Chittur Taluk, Syrian Christians are found all over the State. The Romo-Syrians live in the interior, by the side of the backwater; while the Jacobite Syrians reside in the interior of the Talappilli and Kanayanur Taluks. The Latinites are found on the sea-coast and the Chaldean Syrians in Trichur.

Their houses, constructed in various fashions like those of the Brahmans and Nayars, are situated in gardens abounding in cocoanut and other fruit bearing trees, while those in Trichur Irinjalakuda, Kunnankulam and other places, are in two rows on both sides of the public roads with their church at one extremity. The houses of the upper and middle classes, which are generally quadrangular with an open space *Mittam* in the centre and with broad verandahs in front and consist of several rooms, and upper storeys, are all built of laterite blocks and wood, while those of the poor are thatched mud huts with one or two rooms and a small verandah in front, and the kitchen either adjoining them or in a separate shed outside. The verandahs of the houses in streets are often used as work-shops or shops containing the articles of merchandise for sale. The houses of the rich and middle classes are as well furnished as those in the corresponding Sudra families; and their domestic utensils are more or less of the same kind. But the former cannot approach the latter in point of keeping their houses, furniture and utensils neat and clean. Many among the middle and lower classes rear pigs, which keep the surroundings of the houses and even the streets very insanitary. Their domestic servants are either members of their own community or Pulayans. The women of the latter caste are, in rural parts, employed for sweeping, cleaning vessels and other domestic works.

Each division among the Syrian Christians has become like a Hindu caste, an endogamous sect with no intermarriage between the members of one sect and another, though no objection is made to interdining. Thus there is no intermarriage between the Romo-Syrians and the Jacobite Syrians. The Catholics avoid all conjugal relations among relatives, and even cousins up to the fourth degree are prohibited from intermarriage. When cousins of the second, third and fourth degrees wish to form matrimonial alliances, the Pope's dispensation is

**Marriage Prohibitions.**

necessary. Family status, and social position of the bride and bridegroom are also considered before the proposal for marriage. No intermarriage is allowed between the descendants of a high caste convert and those of a low caste one. The old caste prejudices are still in existence, though in religion they are Christians.

Among the Syrian Christians, as among the Jonakan Mapillas, there are many survivals of their ancient superstitions, and the old caste prejudices, are still found among the different sections of this community. Early marriage, as among the Hindus, was formerly in vogue among them, but now the marriageable age of boys and girls is extended to sixteen and twelve respectively. Among them wedding takes place on Sundays, and it may be celebrated either in the bride's or bridegroom's parish church. In the case of the marriage of a girl to a young man with the consent of their parents, the marriage agreements have to be concluded in the presence of the parish priests, who on successive Sundays before the wedding have the bans published in the two churches. All preliminary arrangements for the wedding are made in the bride's house in the presence of the friends and relatives of both sides, and the dowry which is a prominent feature of the Syrian wedding is also then settled. It should consist of an odd number of rupees tied up in a cloth. On the Thursday before the wedding the house is well decorated with rice flour, and on the Saturday the marriage pandal is put up. The first ceremonial takes place on Saturday, and on the next morning both the bride and bridegroom attend Mass, the bridegroom entering the church before the bride. At present, the bridal pair are in European costume, the bride being completely decked out with ornaments either her own or those she can borrow for the occasion. Before leaving his house the bridegroom gives *Dakshina* (presents of cloth and money), to the *Guru* or preceptor after due obeisance, and is accompanied by a best man, usually his sister's husband, who brings the *Tali*. After Mass, a tithe, *Pathuvaram*, of the bride's dowry is paid to the church as the marriage fee, and a further fee to the priest and a similar fee, *Kaimuttupanam*, to the Bishop. The marriage service is then read, and at its end the bridegroom ties the *tali*

Marriage customs  
among the Jacobite  
Syrians.

round the bride's neck with the thread taken from her veil, making a special knot, while the priest holds the *tali* in front. The priest and the bridegroom put a veil (*mantrakodi*) over her head. The *tali*, which is the marriage badge, should be worn as long as she lives, and, at her death, buried with her.

The bridal pair return home in state, accompanied by their friends and relations. Silk umbrellas being held over them. At the gate they are met by the bride's sister, carrying a lighted lamp, and she washes the bridegroom's feet. The married couple go to the pandal, where they are conspicuously seated and given sweets and plantains by the priest and representatives of the family to the accompaniment of the women's *Kurava* and in the presence of the guests who are seated in order of precedence, the chief persons being seated on white cloths, with black rugs underneath (*Vellayum Karimbatarum*), traditionally a regal honour.<sup>1</sup> The bride and bridegroom are then led into the house by the best man and the bride's uncle, when the bride is directed to put the right foot first as she enters. The guests are sumptuously fed. Before meals are served, they double up their leaves, and this is believed to be symbolical of the royal marriage of eating off a double leaf. Until the following Wednesday the best man sleeps with the bridegroom in the bridal chamber, the bride occupying another room.

On Wednesday evening comes the ceremony called *Nalam Kuli* or fourth day bath. The bridegroom and the best man being in the room lock up the door, when the bride's mother knocks at the door and begs the bridegroom to come out, which he at last does on hearing a song called *Váthil-thura-páttu*, describing the virtues and attractions of the bride. The married couple, newly dressed and decked out, go to the pandal, perform *Pradikshanam* round a lighted lamp, and the bridegroom gives presents of cloths to the bride's uncle, mother and grand parents; after which they are both escorted to the bridal chamber, which in the interval has been cleaned and prepared for them. The next morning the bridegroom with the bride and her party goes to his house where also he goes through the same ceremonial as on the wedding day. The bride's party are similarly treated to a grand dinner. The marriage is now at an end, but on the following Sunday the bride and

1. Vide Chapter II, ante page 24-26.

bridegroom should attend the Mass in the parish church of the latter, if they were married in the bride's.

When a young woman is about to become a mother the ceremony of *Pulikudi*, is performed which is similar to that which is performed for a Nayar woman. It is not now performed by some among them. The pregnant woman is taken to her parents' house during the seventh month, where she remains for two or three months after delivery. When she is in pain of childbirth, a midwife of her own community, a barber or a Velan woman attends on her along with her mother and others. After delivery both the mother and the baby are bathed, and the former during her confinement, is under a prescribed course of diet and treatment; immediately after bath, the child is fed, with drops of honey in which gold has been rubbed, and the mother is under pollution for ten days, after which she is purified by a bath, and her room is well swept and cleaned. Baptism takes place on the fourteenth day, amongst the southern Jacobites, but amongst other divisions on the fifty-sixth day. The ceremony of feeding the baby with rice for the first time takes place in the fifth or the sixth month, when the child is presented by the mother's parents with a gold Cross in the case of a boy, or a similar gold ornament or *tuluva*m if a girl, to be worn round the neck.

Among the Romo-Syrians, marriage is celebrated according to the rules of the Catholic Church when boys and girls are fourteen and twelve years of age respectively. When the marriage of a girl to a young man is proposed by the parents of the contracting parties, a day is fixed for the parents of the conjugal pair, their relatives and friends to meet at the house of the bride to formally talk the matter over, and to settle the dowry which is generally expressed in terms either in so many fanoms (a fanam—four annas and seven pies), or in so many fanams weight of gold. A written promise on a piece of cadjan leaf by the bride's father to give his daughter in marriage to the boy selected, and a similar promise by the bridegroom's father to accept her, are then made, and the pieces of cadjan leaves on which the promises are written, are mutually exchanged in the presence of those assembled to make themselves sure that their promises will be kept up. The members assembled are treated to a grand

Marriage Customs  
among the Romo-  
Syrians.

dinner, and the day for the celebration of the wedding is also then fixed. The payment of a tithe—*Pathuvaram*—seven and a half per cent of the bride's dowry as the marriage fee is made to the church, out of which a small fee to the priest and clergy of the parish. The bride and bridegroom go to the bride's parish church, attend Mass and announce their intention of marriage, when the priests (*Kathanars*) of the parishes to which they belong have the bans called on three successive Sundays, to see if any objection is urged by any of the relatives or of the community to the wedding, in the absence of which they give their formal sanction for the proposed union. On a Monday the wedding is celebrated, though no objection is held against the other days of the week except Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, when they are forbidden to eat meat. A pandal is put up in front of the house and decorated. On the wedding day the bride and bridegroom<sup>1</sup> well dressed and decorated and accompanied by their relatives and friends, go to the church and attend the ordinary Mass. He is accompanied by a best man, who is generally his sister's husband who brings the *tali*. The marriage service is then read, and at its conclusion the priest consecrating the *tali* hands it over to the bridegroom, who ties it round the bride's neck. The priest hands over to the bridegroom a veil *Mantraodi* which he puts over the bride's head. The *tali*, which is the marriage badge should not be removed as long as she remains a wife and should be given to the church at her husband's death. The bridal party then returns to the bride's house in state and large silk umbrellas are held over the married couple. They are seated in a conspicuous place in the pandal and given sweets and plantains first by the senior members of the family and then by others. The bride and bridegroom are then led into the house by the best man and the bride's uncle, and the guests are fed in order of rank. The guests depart, and the married couple stay there, and on the next morning the bridegroom returns to his house with the bride and her party, where similar formalities are gone through and the bride's party are similarly treated. The married couple are again taken to the bride's house and after a stay of a few days there, they go back to the bridegroom's house. The wedding is then over.

1. In former times the bridegroom was dressed in a neat loin cloth with a knife and style stuck to his girdle. It is now given up,



No special day is chosen for their nuptials, which is left to the convenience of the bridal pair.

Among the Romo-Syrians when a girl comes of age or when a woman is in her menses, she conducts herself, in such a way that nobody knows anything about it. She bathes on the third or the fourth day. She is not under seclusion and observes no pollution for the supposed impurity.

When a young woman is about to become a mother no special ceremony is performed for her, but during the seventh month she is taken to her parents' house where the delivery takes place. The woman's relatives who accompany her are sumptuously fed. At the time of child birth a midwife of the community or a barber woman is engaged for any necessary help. As soon as the delivery is over, the woman bathes, if she is not seriously unwell, and the baby is also bathed in warm water. The woman in confinement is subject to a course of treatment and special diet for forty days, and she does not go for her usual routine until after ninety days. The Romo-Syrians observe no pollution for this and for death.

Scripture does not allow polygamy and polyandry among them, but widow marriage is in vogue. Women that go wrong are severely punished and prevented from misconducting themselves again.

Jacobites and St. Thomas Christians use the Syriac liturgy of St. James, but few, even among the priests understand Syriac; in the Reformed Syrian churches, a Malayalam translation of the Syriac liturgy has now been generally adopted. The Jacobites say masses for the dead and believe in purgatory. They invoke the Virgin Mary venerate the cross and relics of the saints. They prescribe auricular confession before mass, and at mass administer the bread dipped in the wine and recite the eastern form of Nicean creed. Jacobite Syrians observe the seven sacraments while the Reformed Syrians have only three namely, baptism, holy orders and mass.

The Jacobites observe the ordinary festivals of the church. The day of the patron saint of each church is treated with special pomp; and on the offering made on that day the priests largely depend for their income. They keep Lent, which they call the fifty days' fast, strictly from the Sunday

before the Ash Wednesday, abjuring all meal, fish, milk, ghee, and liquor. On Monday and Thursday they eat a special kind of unsweetened cake marked in the centre of which the *Kārana-van* of the family should drive a nail and drink a kanji of rice and cocoanut milk. The meal is said to symbolise the Passover and the last supper and the nail is supposed to be driven into the eyes of Judas Iscariot.

Their churches are rectangular buildings with flat or arched wooden roofs and white washed facades; Jacobite Syrian Church. they have no spire, but the chancel which is at the east end is usually somewhat higher than the nave. Between the chancel and the body of the church is a curtain which is driven while the priest consecrates the elements at the Mass. Right and left of the chancel are two rooms, the vestry and sacristy. At the west end is a gallery, in which the *priests* sometimes live. Most churches contain only one altar, and that in the chancel.

The Syrian Bishops are called *Métrans*. They are celibates and live on the contributions of their churches. They wear purple robes and black silk cowls figured with golden Crosses, a big gold Cross round the neck and a ring on the fourth finger of the right hand. Bishops are nominated by their predecessors from the body of *Rambáns* who are selected by the priests and elders in advance by the episcopate. *Metrans* are buried in their robes in a sitting posture. Their priests are called *Kathanars* and should strictly pass through the offices of ostiary reader, exorcist, acolyte, sub-deacon and deacon before becoming priests, but the first three offices do not exist. The priestly office is hereditary. The Jacobite priests until the arrival of the Patriarch in 1875 wore white cassocks, now they wear mostly darkblue. The Reformers keep the ancient white robe with a girdle.”<sup>1</sup>

According to the Census of 1911, the Jacobite Syrians numbered 20,025, and the Reformed Syrians 596. In the Cochin State their chief centres are Kunnankulam, Mulanthuruthi, and Tripunithura, and their ecclesiastical head is assisted by two *Métrans*, and two out of the six consecrated by the Patriarch. They own churches and chapels, and are educationally strong in Lower Secondary and Vernacular schools while

The present conditions of the Non-Roman Syrians.

1. Madras District Gazetteers, Malabar and Anjingo page 297.

the reformed church of St. Thomas has also two Metrans namely, Titus Mar Thoma II. and the Thozhiur Bishop. The church styles itself the St. Thomas Syrians Church, and own one hundred and seventeen churches and chapels and two-hundred Kathanars. They number one-fourth of the community.

The following are the main points in which the Syrian Church differs from the Church of Rome:—"The Jacobite Syrians reject the supremacy of the Pope, acknowledge the supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures, hold no traditions of equal or co-ordinate rank with the scriptures, allow the translation of the scriptures without comment for perusal by the people, do not receive the decrees of the Council of Trent, do not enforce the celibacy of the clergy, nor allow images in churches. They recognize orthodox churches as branches of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and accept the canons of the first Council of Nice, 325 A. D., as well as those of Constantinople, 381 A. D., and Ephesus, 431 A. D., rejecting only those of Chalcedon twenty years later."<sup>1</sup>

The main characteristics of the Syrian Church are:—

1. "The Syrian Church presents an undeniable instance of an ancient church preserved in its purity for the past sixteen or seventeen centuries on the coast of Malabar, and has never acknowledged the supremacy of the Roman pontiff nor his peculiar dogmas after the Coonen Cross revolt."

2. "The church exhibits an independent testimony to the Apostolical polity of the church in the three-fold order of bishop, priest and deacon as sketched by St. Paul in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus and deducible from the St. John's Epistles to the angels of the seven Asiatic churches written sixty years after the promulgation of the Gospel, and uniformly acknowledged by the ecclesiastical writers of the age immediately next to that of the Apostles."<sup>2</sup>

Reformed Syrians wished to multiply the copies of the Syrian scriptures, to translate the scriptures into Malayalam, to establish schools on scripture principles, to improve the education of the clergy, and make use of the vernacular in preaching and expounding the Gospel.<sup>3</sup>

The Jacobite Syrian Church contains the very essence of Popery without the supremacy of the Church of Rome. The

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1, The Indian Christians of St Thomas, page 121-23.  
 2, do do do 124.  
 3, do do do 125.

great body believe in transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the Mass for the living and the dead, prayers for the departed, purgatory, worship of the Virgin Mary, veneration of the saints, prayers in an unknown tongue, extreme unction, allow pictures in their churches representing God the father, prayers to the altar and the chancel, connected with which are the elevation of the host, the burning of incense, the ringing of bells at the time of that elevation, the priest receiving Mass alone.<sup>1</sup>

At funerals except among the reformed sect, it is usual for each of the dead man's relations to bring a cloth to serve as a shroud. Before the body is lowered into the grave, holy oil is poured into the eyes, nostrils and ears. The mourners are under pollution, and fast till the day of the *Pula kuli*, (purification), and till then masses should be said daily for the dead. The *Pula kuli* is performed usually on the eleventh day, but may be deferred till the fifteenth, seventeenth or the twenty-first or sometimes till the forty-first. Incense is applied to the mourners, while hymns are sung and prayers offered. Each then gives a contribution of money to the priest, and receives in return a few grains of cumin. A feast is given to the neighbours and the poor. On the fortieth day there is another feast, at which meat is eaten by the mourners for the first time. A requiem Mass should be said each month on the day of death for twelve months, and on the first anniversary the mourning concludes with a feast.

When a member of the Catholic community is dead, the corpse is well washed and neatly dressed and then placed in a coffin, which is neatly decorated and has lighted candles placed on three or four sides with a crucifix between them. The parish priest attends the funeral to offer prayers in the house on behalf of the spirit of the departed. The body is then taken to the church and buried in the cemetery, when also similar prayers are offered. In the case of the rich, the funeral processions are very grand. On the third day in the case of boys and on the seventh in the case of the grown up, the mourners attend the church and offer prayers for the soul of the dead. These three or seven days are considered as days of pollution, though they do not now-a-days observe it. On the seventh, thirty-first or forty-first day similar ceremonies are performed and prayers offered for the dead. In some cases, either on the seventh,

1. The Indian Christians of St. Thomas p. 129.

ninth, eleventh or on the fifteenth day, a ceremony called *Pula kuli* (bath to be freed from pollution) is performed. The members of the family bathe; and the priest of the parish performs some ceremonies and offers prayers both in the church and in the family of the dead, when those who are invited are treated to a feast. Each of the guests contributes something for the ceremony. A commemorative rite corresponding to *sradha* is also performed by some at the end of the year. Among the Latinites, the chief mourners and the members of the community who have attended the burial are sumptuously entertained after the funeral, but this practice does not exist among the Romo-Syrians.

The Romo-Syrians use the Chaldean liturgy, and the Latinites the liturgy of the Church of Rome. Their daily religious routine consists in the worship of one true God (the father, the son, and the holy ghost) with prayers and prostrations three times a day, and a special prayer at night to the Almighty, Blessed Virgin and the saints in which all the members of the family join. Similar prayers are offered both when they go to bed at night and rise up in the morning, before and after meals, and also when they go to and return from work. Sundays are their days of Sabbath, when they attend the ceremonies in their parish church and spend the day in devotion and in the perusal of religious books. Besides Sundays they have other holidays or days of obligation, namely, Feasts of the Nativity of Jesus Christ, Circumcision, Epiphany and Ascension. Feasts of the Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Virgin Mary, feasts of the Apostles Peter and Paul and all the saints, as also Duhrana. These days were originally thirteen, but were reduced to eight by a recent Papal Bull. They also observe the ordinary festivals of the church the day of the patron saint of each being celebrated with great pomp; they have seven sacraments, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders and matrimony.

Baptism is called *Gnāna snanam* in Malayalam (bath to attain wisdom) and *Māmōdisa* in Syriac. It takes place on the seventh day, when the god-father and god-mother of the baby are treated to a feast. Among the Latins a grand feast on this occasion is celebrated in the

house of the mother at the expense of her husband. The baby is also named that day.

The common names among the Syrian Christians are  
 Baptismal names. George (Gevarugesā, Vargisā, Varki); Thomas (Thōmma, Thoman, Umman); John (Yohanan, Lonan); Luke (Lukkosa, Koshi); Mathew (Mathai, Mathan, Mathu); Joseph (Yoseph, Ouseph); Jacob (Chakko); Peter (Pathros, Pathappan); Alexander (Chandy); Isaac (Itti, Ittak); Abraham (Ittyera); most of the Gospel names are in use among them. It may be seen from the list of ordinary names given above, that they are so badly distorted as to defy identification. In no sects among the Christians are such Gospel names alone in use as among the Syrian Christians, and it is believed that they are the appellations of their early Christian ancestors. The common names among women are Mary (Mariyam); Achi, Achambila, Sarah, Eliza (Elisa), Ali (Elizabeth), Anna, Annapennu, Eunica (Unichi), Rebecca (Akka), Rosa. Some of the common names among the Latinites are (1) Otambattil Avara Kappithan, (Captain), Kochiyil Lodikar, (2) Nanayil Chandy Alparis (Alfares), Mundiriyil Avara Kappithan, Kuttasseriyl Varki Araju. These names denote that some of the members of the community are the descendants of those who had served in the Portuguese army in former times; and the old military titles are still kept up.

The Catholics are, as has been said, of two divisions,  
 Church Govern- Romo-Syrians and Romo-Latins. The former  
 ment. are under the spiritual government of two Bishops or Vicars Apostolic, whose headquarters are at Trichur and Ernakulam, and are assisted by a Vicar General and a council of four members. Under their jurisdiction are parishes with churches, each of which is governed by a priest ordained from among themselves. The affairs of every Syrian Church are managed by two or more Kaikkars or wardens periodically elected from among the parishioners approved by the Bishops. They are the trustees of the church property, and with the priest exercise considerable powers in religious and social matters in the parish. The priests receive a salary of Rs. 15, 20, or 25, varying according to the income of the church. Besides this, they have other emoluments--half a rupee for Mass, one rupee and four annas for funeral ceremonies, ten annas for marriage, and proportionate fees for other ceremonies. The

Latinites also have similar organizations, and priests get similar incomes, and are governed by three European Bishops—the Archbishop of Varapuzha and the Bishop at Cochin and Coimbatore.

Under these Bishoprics are a few High Schools, some Lower Secondary and many Primary Schools, all maintained at the expense of the church and from contributions by the members of the community, supplemented by Government grants.

The Syrian Christians are an industrious and enterprising class of people. They are found in all grades of occupation. Many are agriculturists, while others are engaged in trade. The lower class of Christians learn every kind of art, and adapt themselves to every kind of occupation, in which they are generally proficient. Thus, there are, among them, many who are carpenters, blacksmiths, bricklayers, stone-masons, weavers, umbrella makers and the like.

The occupations above mentioned are pursued by the Latinites also, and a large number of them on the sea-coast live by fishing. They are an industrious community, somewhat backward in point of higher education. In the Government service the Christians rank numerically below the Brahmans and the Nayars.

These people take *Kanji* early in the morning with some pickles, and their dinner, which is at noon, often consists of boiled rice with vegetable or meat curries. Many are pork eaters, and for this they rear pigs. They consume all kinds of vegetables and the flesh of sheep, fowls, deer, pigs, porcupine, cows, snipe, etc. They consume the food prepared by all high caste Hindus, and the members of all Hindu castes from the Ezhuvans downwards eat their food.

The Romo-Syrians, like other Catholics, fast during Lent. All who have attained the age of twenty-one are bound to fast on one meal and a collation on the seven Fridays and the last Saturday of Lent and on the vigil of Christmas. On all fasting days except Good Friday, eggs, milk, butter, etc., are allowed, at the full meal. Milk in tea or coffee is not allowed except at the full meal or at the collation. The use of meat is forbidden on all Wednesdays and Fridays in Lent, on Holy Saturday and the vigil of Christmas. Meat is allowed to all once a day at dinner on all week days except on Wednesdays,

Fridays and Sundays. Flesh and fish cannot be taken at the same meal during Lent. Eggs, butter, milk and cheese are forbidden to all on Good Friday.

The Syrian Christians are mostly like the Nayars in their physical characteristics and are seen in all shades of complexion; the converts and their descendants possess all the characteristics of their fore-fathers except the tuft of hair on their heads. The males generally dress like the Nayars, but shave their heads clean without having a tuft of hair on the top like the Nayars. They do not wear ear-rings, nor bore their ears. The Romo-Syrians wear a small cross suspended from a string passing round their neck. The women are short in stature, and are as handsome as their sisters in the higher Hindu castes. Their loin dress consists of a white garment, with or without a coloured border, seven yards long, one or one and a quarter yards broad, and is worn folded with a number of fringes behind, but the end is not passed through the legs and tucked up behind like the Nayar women. The upper part of the body is covered with a jacket. Among the middle and lower classes the same dress is used for days together without renewal; and this, together with the irregularity in their bath which is taken only once or twice a week, make them appear very uncleanly. Boys and girls reading in schools are often seen in dirty dress and with skin disease on their body. The hair on the head of women is smoothened with cocoanut or gingelly oil, and is tied into a knot behind without being well parted.

The women bore their ears in several places, and wear a kind of heavy gilt brass rings (*Mekka mothiram*) at the top of each ear. The ear lobes are, by means of lead weights, very much dilated by the Syrian Christian women when quite young to wear a U shaped ornament at the time of their wedding but not afterwards. They have a necklet of sorts (*Ottezhapattak, Kombu, Thala, Nazhi*), rings of various kinds for the fingers and anklets. But many of these are not used after their first or second delivery.

Thus far have been described the customs and manners of the various sects of the Syrian community. Ethnically they are not a race, but are only the descendants of converts from all castes from ancient times and those recruited in

The Present Social condition of the Syrian Community.



recent times. There has not been much of fusion and intermingling among them till now. Their origin and early traditions are very much disputed. The caste customs and usages, in spite of the long lapse of time, have not quite disappeared even under rigorous christian teaching and discipline. Even now, there are among them various grades of social precedence which are brought into light in marriage settlements. The daughter of a high caste convert is not allowed to marry a low caste convert, though there are exceptions. There are many survivals of the Hindu customs observed at their weddings, and some of the Hindu holidays are still observed by them. They believe in astrology, magic, sorcery, and witchcraft. In religion they are under the wholesome discipline of the church. On the whole they are a thriving and industrious community in the State.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE JONAKAN MAPPILLAS.

The Jonakan Mappillas are a Muhammadan sect found all over the Cochin State, their chief centres being Cochin, Cranganore and some parts of the Mukundapuram Taluk. They are mostly either the descendants of the offspring of Arab traders and the low caste women of Malabar, or converts to the faith of Islam from the lower Hindu castes. They are a race peculiar to the West Coast, and numbered at the last Census 63,822, 32,707 being males and 31,115 being females.

The word *Mappilla* is, strictly speaking, applied both to these people and the Syrian Christians, who are also called *Nazarene Mappillas*. The significance of *Jonakan*, according to a Malayalam song (*Payyanir pattu*) is a sailor known as *Jonavar* or *Yavanar*, i. e., the Greeks.

The meaning of the word *Mappilla* is somewhat disputed. Dr. Day calls them "Mothers' children"—*Ma*, mother and *pilla* a child—the offspring of fugative alliances of the Arabs with the Thiyya or Choga women of the coast. He also says that the term is not used by the castemen; for it is a term of reproach cast on them by the rest of the community.<sup>1</sup> This statement, however, does not appear to be founded on fact, as there is no tradition nor any authentic account of the first Arab settlers of Malabar having had intercourse with native women, and much less, promiscuous intercourse, which would have been regarded as laxity of morals in the first Muhammadan missionaries.<sup>2</sup> The word also signifies a bridegroom on the day of marriage. The Syrian Christians, who were called by this name, were in former times a powerful and respectable community, and the title of *Mappilla* might have originally belonged to them, and been borrowed from them by the *Jonakans*. Dr. Gundert holds that Mappillas i. e., '*Mappilai*' was an honorific title applied to the western immigrants.

1. Land of the Perumals, p. 366.

2. Malabar Quarterly, Vol. II, page 84.

Traditional accounts of their origin exist in abundance, and differ materially from one another. Some of them are said to have settled on the West Coast in the seventh century, where they established themselves under Caliph Valid, and were believed to be a portion of the posterity of Hâshem, expelled by Muhammad for cowardice in his battles against the partisans of Abu Jákeem. In the 7th century a Muhammadan merchant named Málik Medina, accompanied by some priests, are stated by Moens to have settled in or near Mangalore. But the Muhammadans obtained no great footing until the ninth century of the Christian Era.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the introduction of Islam into Malabar, there is also the following tradition. The last of the Perumals (*Cheraman Perumál*) dreamt that the full moon appeared at Mecca on the night of the new moon and that when on the Meridian it split into two, one half remaining in the skies and the other half descending to the foot of a hill called "*Abu-Kubais*", where the halves joined together and set. shortly afterwards a party of Muhammadan pilgrims, on their way to the foot-print shrine on Adam's peak in Ceylon, landed in his capital Kodungallur, and reported that by the same miracle Muhamed had converted a number of unbelievers to his religion. This roused the curiosity of the Perumal, and with a view to embracing the Moslem faith, he managed secretly to leave his land with them for Arabia. Having privately arranged the affairs of his kingdom, and in particular, having assigned to the different chieftains under him their respective portions of territory, he sailed in a vessel constructed by the pilgrims, stayed a day at Quilandy, reached Dharmapattanam near Tellicherry the next day, and after entrusting the *Kovilagam* (palace) of that place to the care of the ancestor of the present Zamorins, took ship again, and landed at *Shahr* on the Arabian Coast. He assumed the same *Abdul Rahman Sámiri*, and stayed there for a considerable time as a Muhammadan convert. After many adventures, he desired to return to his native country to establish the new religion, but was prevented from so doing, owing to his sudden and unexpected death. But before this took place he entrusted the work of propagating the New Faith to a family consisting of *Malik, Ibn, Dinar*, his two sons,

1. Day's Land of the Perumals, page 367-68.

his grandson, and wife with their ten sons and five daughters, and gave them letters to various princes in Malabar, ordering them to allow the bearers to build mosques and to grant them other privileges. He directed them to land nowhere save at Kodungallur (Cranganore), Dharmapattanam, Pantaláyani, Kollam and Southern Kollam (Quilon). It is also said that they were received with great favour by the Zamorin of Calicut, who assigned to them some places in Calicut for their trade. The story then goes on to tell how mosques were erected at Kodungallur, Quilon, Mádaí, Vakanur, Mykaláth (Mangalore), Kánjarakode (Kasrikode), Cheruvapattanam (Sreekandhapuram) and Pantalayani (Cháliyam). This is said to have taken place in 843 A. D.

Mr. Logan gives information received from an Arab resident near the spot that the tomb of the Royal convert still exists at Zaphir near Shahr, where he is reported to have landed, and that the inscription on it runs as follows:—"Arrived at Zaphir A. H. 212, died there A. H. 216", his name being *Abdul Rahman Sámiri*. The dates given above correspond to 823 and 827 A. D. Further, the popular tradition that the *Kollam Era* of the West Coast, which dates from the 25th August 825 A. D., is based on the departure of *Cheraman Perumal* to Arabia as described above.

Thus all authorities agree in placing the date of the settlement of the Arabs in the middle of the ninth century. There is still a popular belief that the Royal convert was taken up to Heaven and that they expect his descent, for which purpose they still assemble at Cranganore, and keep ready the wooden shoes and water, and, on a certain night in the year, burn lamps as a festival in honour of his memory.

It is generally admitted that the convert king was Cheraman Perumal and that the new religion met at the outset with opposition from the ruling class. It may also be noted that places such as Kodungallur, Quilon, etc., where mosques were erected through the influence of the four apostles (Malik Ibn Dinar, Habib Ibn Malik, Sherif Ibn Malik and Malik Ibn Habib), were already important commercial centres, and it is very probable that trade and propagandism were their chief motives. It is important to note that the Mappillas began early to rise in importance and their relationship with the 'Zamorins'

became more and more close. To the Zamorins the new element was a source of strength, supplying fighting materials on land and on sea, besides improving the trade of the country. The patronage of the ruling class was to the Mappillas the best means of gaining power and privilege, and to obtain these they allied themselves with the Zamorin.<sup>1</sup>

The preponderance of Muhammadan influence in the Zamorin's court led to a change in the course of foreign trade. The fifteenth century marks the era of prosperity to Islam in Malabar. When Abdur Rasak visited the country, two *Jamath* mosques had grown up in Calicut. The power and influence of the *Mappillas* had grown to such an extent as to lead the author of the Malabar District Manual to say that the whole country could have been converted into Islam by force or by conviction; but the nations of Europe were busy endeavouring to find a direct route to the pepper country of the east. The ascendancy of Islam was manifest when Vasco de Gama visited Calicut.

The arrival of the European nations one after another gave a death blow to the Egyptian trade carried on by the *Mcors*.

Concerning the origin of the Mappillas, it may be safely said that they form a kind of hybrid community composed of the descendants of mixed unions with very little of Arab blood, and with converts from the very lowest classes of Hindus. In the early days the Zamorins of Calicut encouraged conversion to a large extent for their own aggrandizement. This practice has been and is still going on even now in Malabar and Cochin State; and large numbers of recruits came from the *Thiyyans* of Malabar, *Izhuvans* of the State, and also from the *Pulayans*, to whom "the honour of Islam brings enfranchisement from the disabilities of their own caste". Occasionally but not often converts are drawn from the native Christians also. The hybrid nature of the race can be clearly noticed in its various physiognomy; those belonging to old families and occupying high social position are often very fair with fine features, while others are often indistinguishable from the lower classes from which they had their being.

The Mappillas generally live in towns near the sea-coast and very few of them live in the interior.

Habitations.

Even these, where the prospect of trade

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1. Malabar Quarterly Review, Vol. V, page 133.

induces them to do so, they congregate in towns and in small bazaars; but where agriculture is the chief occupation, each family resides in a detached enclosure or garden near their lands. Nevertheless they have not, like the Nayars, any objection to reside in a town. The houses of the wealthy people are somewhat like those of the Nayars and the Izhuvans, but the poorer classes live in huts consisting of two rooms and a verandah in front. There are no peculiarities in architecture or design calling for any special comment, and the typical Mappilla street is picturesque, though dirty.

Of the four sects into which the Muhammadans are divided *viz.*, Shafee, Hanafee, Ambalick, and Malick, the Mappillas belong to the first. The members of these sects profess the same religion, perform the same ceremonies, and make no objection to interdining, but do not intermarry. Absence of intermarriage is not based upon any religious sentiments or prejudices, but merely on certain social distinctions. They have no objection to entering into conjugal relationship with close relatives. The sons and daughters of brothers and sisters often intermarry. They also prefer matrimonial alliance between a man's son and his sister's daughter and *vice versa*. In Malabar and Cochin there are to be found the descendants of the Muhammadan *Pattáns* of Afghan descent, between whom and the Mappillas there is no intermarriage.

Mappilla girls are in these days, married before and sometimes after puberty, but generally marriages take place when girls are between 12 and 14 years of age, though some of them marry at an earlier age.

When a suitable girl has been selected for the marriage of a young man, a convenient day is fixed for the relations and friends of the bride and bridegroom to assemble in the house of the former to talk over the matter, and to settle the dowry to be given to the bride by her parents. The members assembled there are courteously received and sumptuously treated. The marriage of girls before puberty is generally celebrated during the day-time, but that of those after puberty, during the night.

All preliminaries having been settled and the day for the celebration fixed, the bride's party is treated to a feast in the house of the bridegroom, and the latter attended by his party proceeds to the house of the bride, where her father meets him

Sub-divisions and  
Marriage Prohibi-  
tions.

and sprinkles on him some rose water. The whole party then proceed to a pandal, in which they sit on carpets or mats spread on the floor, and partake of betel leaves and nuts. The only religious ceremony necessary for the wedding is the *Nikka*, which consists of the formal conclusion of the contract before two witnesses and the Kazi who registers it then. It can be performed by any learned man, but is generally the duty of the Kazi within whose jurisdiction the bride lives. It is done either on the day of the nuptials or any day previous to it—in some instances months, and in rare instances years, before the nuptials. In the latter case the bridegroom or his father and a select party go to the Jumna Musjid or any other mosque near the house of the bride, where the bride's father or grandfather or in their absence any other relation having religious authority to give away the girl in marriage presents himself along with the bridegroom before the Kazi, who makes the two repeat the necessary formula in the presence of two competent witnesses. The formula consists of the recital of the *Kalima*, and a formal acceptance of the conditions of the match thrice repeated. But when *Nikka* is performed on the day of nuptials, it is done in the bride's house on or before entering the nearest mosque. In Calicut the *Kazi* personally goes to four particular houses, while the members of other houses are by time-honoured custom bound to go to the Kazi's house. After the performance of the *Nikka*, there is in the bride's house a grand feast to those that are invited to attend the wedding. As soon as the bridegroom and his party enter the bride's house, they are seated in a prominent place and the feast begins. The bridegroom and his best men are then conducted to a room specially prepared for their reception, and after a few minutes' stay therein, the latter withdraw, leaving the bridegroom alone. The bride with a *tali* tied round her neck by her sister is next introduced into the room by her female relations, and the door of the room is then closed by them. The pair are left together for a few minutes. The bride leaves the room first, and the bridegroom's best men or party then enter and take him back to his house. In some cases, they are permitted to spend the whole night together, and the bridegroom takes leave only the next morning. In some places the bride is first conducted into the bridal chamber, and the bridegroom is next introduced into it, but remains only a few moments and then leaves. This prevails

only in the case of girls who are very young, and the early marriage custom favours their practice. In North Malabar and Calicut the wife lives in her own house with her mother and her sisters as the Nayar women in a Marumakkathayam family. The husband visits her there, but in some cases, where the husband is rich and has a number of children, he erects a separate house for his wife and children. In such a case, the wife goes to the husband's house only on short visits. In South Malabar and in the Cochin State, the wife is taken to the husband's house soon after the nuptials as circumstances permit, and she lives there for ever, going to her own house only on short visits and for her first confinement. Co-habitation, as a rule, takes place immediately after marriage, unless the bride is very young. It may be said in this connection that, while the expenses on the part of the bride's parents in North Malabar are very heavy owing to the difficulty of securing suitable bridegrooms, in South Malabar and the Cochin State, where the people are poorer, matrimonial alliances are not so expensive.

If the girl is a virgin, her modesty is respected, and she is allowed to signify her consent or otherwise by signs or facial expressions. She can, for example, show her repugnance by covering her face and her consent by smiling. Among the Mappillas, the parents of girls take the responsibility, but if she is no longer *Virgo intacta*, she is allowed to speak freely.

Polygamy is very much in vogue among the Mappillas of the State as well as amongst those in the Ernád and Valluvanad Taluks of South Malabar. It may be stated without fear of contradiction that a very large number of these people are polygamists, having more than two wives, and some amongst them have even four. The wives all stay with him in the same house, and disunion amongst them is a perennial source of uneasiness to the husband, and frequently leads to divorce. The practice of marrying a deceased brother's wife and of a deceased wife's sister is also very common. Disparity in age is never considered objectionable. Polyandry is unknown.

Concerning polygamy, Syed Ameer Ali says, "Polygamy was recognised as lawful among the nations of antiquity; and the practice had received the sanction of the holy personages of Judaism. As among the Kulin Brahmans, the Pagan Arabs



put no limit on the number of wives a man might have. In certain stages of development polygamy is not an evil. The Arabian Prophet, with the true conception of the social and moral conditions and necessities of the age, with the questions in a manner which harmonises with the most advanced standard and at the same time meets the needs and requirements of the least progressed."<sup>1</sup>

The Koran loudly proclaims the inferiority of women, which naturally justifies their subjugation, and this subjugation is great in all polygamous countries. There is no ambiguity on this point in the words of the Prophet. "Men are superior to women by reason of the qualities God has given them to place them above women, and because men employ their wealth in giving dowries to women. Virtuous women are obedient and submissive; they carefully guard during their husband's absence that which God has ordered them to preserve in tact. Thou shalt correct those whom thou fearest may be disobedient: thou shalt put them in beds apart; thou shalt beat them; but as soon as they obey thee again, do not seek cause for quarrel with them; God is merciful and Great."<sup>2</sup>

It is evident that Islamism arose amidst the full polygamic regime. Its founder could not dream of establishing any other. Polygamy was therefore established by divine right among the faithful, and as at the bottom it is in accord with primitive instincts of men, it has maintained itself in Mussalman countries from the time of Muhamed to our own days.

From the sociological point of view it gives us the opportunity of studying and estimating the polygamic regime in its full development.

"A Mussalman is allowed to marry one, two, three, or four wives, provided he can deal with all of them with equity. If that be not possible, he can marry but one. Many of the best minds of Islam have perceived in this, and a virtual prohibition on Mussalman society, as a whole, can hardly be ignored. It has, in Mussalman countries, untainted by foreign social ideas, prevented the growth of that class whose existence is an outrage to humanity and disgrace to civilization. Considering how the profession of the *ketairai*, honoured among some nations, despised amongst others, but tolerated by most, has flourished through all ages, it is no small credit to the Arabian teacher that it was so effectually stopped in Islam."<sup>3</sup>

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1, 2 and 3. Islam by Ameer Ali Syed, page 29-30.

It is sanctioned by religion, and is actually practised without limit, the want of eligible husbands alone preventing it in all cases. There are isolated instances of women widowed young, having chosen of their own accord, life-long widowhood.

Religion permits a husband to divorce his wife on any ground whatever, and even on no grounds. In the actual exercise of this license, there is a vast difference between North and South Malabar. In North Malabar divorce is the exception, and is looked upon with much disapprobation; but in South Malabar it is almost the rule, and it is not of unfrequent occurrence even on the very first day after the marriage. At the same time, the act was pronounced to be 'the most abominable in the sight of the Lord'.<sup>1</sup>

A wife can divorce her husband only on specific grounds such as the following:—1. His inability to maintain her with the least amount of comfort she can afford to put up with. This included the provision of a house, and the payment of the *Mahur* if demanded before intercourse. 2. Incurable and loathsome diseases of the husband or incurable impotency. 3. Permanent impairment of powers. Divorce by a husband is called *Talak*, and by the wife *Faskh*. Divorce is effected by the husband or the wife simply reciting the formula—"I have untied the tie between myself and wife or husband." Generally the husband recites the formula in the presence of the near relations of the wife; or in their absence, he intimates to the *Kâzi*, having jurisdiction over the woman, the fact of his having divorced her. Utterance of the formula by word of mouth is however indispensable. There is nothing like recognised *panchayets* to settle disputes bearing on marriage, and such disputes are left to the decision of the *Kazi* and a few respectable men of the locality.

As soon as a child is born, it is bathed in cold water and rubbed with a dry piece of cloth. It is then taken in hand by a Mullah; and raising it to the breast, the Mullah recites in the child's ears the two formulas of the call of prayers which are daily repeated five times, the first *Azâm* to announce the hours of prayers and the second *Kâmat* just before engaging in prayer to bring together the scattered congregation attending the

<sup>1</sup>. Non-Christian Religious Systems, Islam and its founder, page 151, 161, 164.

mosque. The primary object of this ceremony is to drive away the evil spirits. But it is also symbolical of the fact that the span of life allotted to the new comer is as short as the time between the *Kdmat*, second prayer-call, and the prayer itself. Then a piece of gold is rubbed in some rough vessel, a little honey is added, and the mixture given to the child.

The mid-wife engaged for the woman during delivery is a barber woman or a woman of the Mappillas in the Cochin State and South Malabar; and in North Malabar she is a Hindu barber woman. The next ceremony is the mother's bath on the fifteenth and on the twenty-eighth days after child-birth. The latter ceremony is performed with much pomp, and much money is squandered on it.

The time for naming the child varies in different places; in North Malabar it is done on the day of birth, while in the southern Taluks of Malabar and the Cochin State, it takes place within six months after the date of birth. It is sometimes done on the seventh day and sometimes on the fourteenth day. On the former day a goat or cow is sacrificed, and the flesh is distributed among the neighbours. The next ceremony is the tonsure, which is sometimes performed on the seventh day, but is generally postponed to the third month after birth. Friends and relations of the parents are invited and treated to a feast. The guests who are present, each gives a few annas to the barber, whose fee for the service generally amounts to three rupees.

A boy should be taught to pronounce the name of God and to recite *Kalima* at the age of four. Circumcision (*sunnath*), should be performed between the age of seven and fourteen years. It is usually done in the tenth or twelfth year. A Mul-lah offers some prayers and *fatehas* before the operation, which is performed by the barber with a sharp razor. The barber sits opposite to the boy, who has his cloth tied up to his shoulders, and a bystander should hold up a lighted lamp even if the operation is performed in the day-time. The usual time is just before high tide. The ceremony, which is the outward sign of the boy's admission into the fold of Islam, is made the occasion of much feasting and rejoicing, and large sums of money are often distributed to the poor. The boy must go to the mosque on the first Friday on which he is able

to go out. The ceremony of ear boring for girls is an occasion for spending much money by those who can afford it.

**Circumcision.** Circumcision though, as a rule, practised by the Muham-medans, is not a positive precept and is not mentioned in the Koran. It was practised by the Arabs before Muhammed's time, and was continued by the faithful as an Abrahamic rite. Some of the Berbers of Morrocco do not practise it.<sup>1</sup>

**Inheritance.** Throughout the Cochin State, the Mappillas follow inheritance in the male line, while in the Taluks of Malabar north of Calicut, their inheritance is in the female line. But in some places, viz., Ponnani, Parappanangádi and Tirur of South Malabar, a man's family property goes to his nephews and his self-acquisitions to his sons and daughters. Curiously enough, even among those whose inheritance is patrilineal, the wife seldom lives with her husband in his own home, but on the contrary, the husband visits her as in a Marumakkathayam family.

**Religion.** The Mappillas belong to the Shafi school of the Sunni sect; that is, they acknowledge, besides the Koran, the authority of the *sunneh* or the customary law of Arabian theology as interpreted by *Shafi*. In South Malabar they are divided into two sects preferring allegiance to the valiya Járatingal Tangal of Ponnani and the Kundotti Tangal respectively.

The Mappillas acknowledge the religious supremacy of the Sultan of Constantinople. The Tangals are their religious leaders, and they are regarded with a high degree of respect, but they are not generally distinguished for their learning. The principal authority on religious matters is the *Makdun Tangal* of Ponnani. He is the head of the Ponnani religious institution founded more than six hundred years ago by one of his ancestors named Zein-ud-din, an Arab. At this college the students, who go from all parts of Malabar, Cochin, Travancore, and even from South Canara, are boarded out among the townspeople to study the Koran in the *Jamat Mosque*. The course of study is said to be somewhat unsystematic, but those selected by the *Tangal* to read 'by the big lamps' in the mosque are known as *Musaliyars* (Moulvi or elder) or *Mullahs*, and are fit and proper persons to give instructions in the *Kóran* and the

1. Lane, 'Modern Egypt' I, 84; II, 278.

commentaries (*kitab*). Near the *Jamát* mosque is the *Járam* or Mausoleum of the Tangals, an object of profound veneration among the Mappillas. The Mappillas strictly observe the five essentials of the Muhammadan religion, namely, the recital of the *Kalima* or creed, the five daily prayers (*niskáram*), the *Ramzan* fast, the duty of alms *Zakkáth*, tithe and the *Haj* or pilgrimage to Mecca.

The daily prayers are to be said at day-break, at midday, before sunset, after sunset, and at about 8-30 or 9 P. M., and ablution of the hands and feet head and face should precede each. The first *Niskáram* should consist of two *Rakháyats* or forms of prayer, comprising the *Fatéha* or recital of the first chapter of the Koran, and the usual genuflexions and prostrations (*sujúd*), the second, third, and the fifth *niskárams* should consist of four *Rakháyats* and the fourth should consist of the three. All prayers are in the Arabic language, which only a very few even of the Tangals can understand. Prayers must be said in the mosque on Fridays, and the call to prayer (*Azam vanku* or "adzan") is made by the *Mullah* or *Mukri*. It begins with the *Thakbir*, 'Allahu Akbar', and ends with the *kalima*, "La illaha Illal Lah".

"The Ramzan is a 30 days' fast corresponding to the 30 days' Lent, and begins as soon as the Ramzan new-moon is seen, and ends with the appearance of the next new-moon. It is supposed to be the survival of the old *Kaaba* worship at Mecca. The fast is in all its strictness observed, a good Mappilla refraining from even swallowing his spittle between sunrise and sunset, after which he may take food. The last *Niskáram* should, during *Rámzan*, be said at the mosque, and consists of 20 *Rakháyats*, and at Friday service there is a general congregational confession. The 27th night of the fast is considered the most holy time, and it is observed that on that night the *Kòran* is believed to be sent down from Heaven, and that the prayers said on that night secure pardon from all sins. Further, on that night the pious Mappilla should not fail to give alms, *Zakkáth*, to the poor amounting to 2½ per cent of his wealth, cattle and merchandise. On the night of the next moon the fast concludes with a grand feast called *Cheriyá Peru-nál* (little big day), as soon as the new-moon has appeared, and is accompanied as are all Mappilla festivals by many fireworks."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>. Non-Christian Religious Systems, Islam and its founder, page 185, 197.

The chief festival celebrated by the Mappillas is the *Bakrid* or Valiya Perunal in the third month after Rāmzān, which is said to commemorate Abraham's offering of Isaac, and every Mappilla who can afford it must sacrifice a he-goat or a bullock, and distribute the flesh among his friends and relations and the poor.

The Mappillas only observe the ninth and tenth days of Muharam; they do not make taboots.

*Shabi barat* or 'night of record' on the 14th of *Shaban*, the month before Ramzan, is celebrated amongst the rich by the distribution of alms."

Mappilla mosques (*palli*) are rectangular buildings with sloping tiled roofs and ornamental gables in front. Like those of the Hindu temples, some of them have gate-houses, and a few of the oldest have circular towers, though not in the Cochin State. The main entrance to the sacred edifice is towards the west so that the congregation may face the east and towards Mecca. There is often a small tank close by. A Mullah, who can read, but not necessarily understand Arabic, is attached to every mosque to lead the services; this Mullah is appointed by the congregation, though as a rule the Kazi nominates him. The Kazi is the head of the Jamat (lit: assembly) or Friday mosque, which corresponds to the parish church or the village temple. His functions include the reading of the Friday sermon (*Kutba*) the registration of marriages and general arbitration in civil and religious matters. His jurisdiction may extend to over more than one *desam* (village), and may include several minor mosques. *Musaliyars* are not necessarily attached to any particular mosque, but travel about preaching and teaching.

Islam, which means peace greeting, safety, or salutation, is the name given by the followers of the Arabian Prophet to their religion. It is pure monotheism, and in its ethical sense it signifies striving after righteousness. Its cardinal principle is a belief in the unity, power, mercy, and supreme love of the Creator. The Gospel of Islam is the Koran—the book in which are embodied the teachings and precepts of their prophets. The Mappillas worship many saints (*Ouliya-kanmar*), and martyrs (*Sayids* or *Sahibs*); and their religion betrays many traces of primitive animism. Celebrated Tangals such as the Tangals of Mamran and men of holy and austere

life are canonized, and their tombs (*Mukham, Jaram*), have become holy shrines and popular places of pilgrimage (*ziyarat*). Canonization is often easily obtained, for it is both honourable and profitable to be the guardian of such a shrine. Sometimes an unknown beggar dying of starvation on the roadside may be endowed with all sorts of virtues after death, and worshipped as a saint and miracle worker. The Shāhids are celebrated in hymns and popular songs, which have served to inspire the fanatics of many of the Mappilla outbreaks. Annual festivals called *Nircha* (vow) are celebrated in commemoration of these saints, the most important of which are those held at Malapuram and Kundotti in South Malabar. The Mappillas have a common religious observance in the celebration of what is called a *Mavulad* or *Maulad*. A *Maulad* is a tract or short treatise in Arabic, which celebrates the birth, life, works, and sayings of the Prophet or some saint such as Shaik-Mohiuddin, eleventh descendant of the Prophet, expounder of the *Kóran* and worker of the miracles, or the *Mambram Tangal*, father of *Sayid Fasl*. For the ceremony a Mullah is called in to read the book, which is in verse, and the congregation is required to make responses and join in the singing. This ceremony, which usually takes place in the evening, concludes with or is preceded by a feast, to which the friends and relations are invited. Every Mappilla, who can afford it, should perform a *Maulad* in honour of Shaik-Mohiuddin on the eleventh day and in honour of the Prophet on the twelfth. It should also be performed on the third day after a death. It is a common practice to celebrate it in fulfilment of a vow before any important undertaking on which it is desired to invoke a blessing; hence the custom of celebrating *Maulads* precluding outbreaks.<sup>1</sup>

The absence of a specially instructed class of priests to act as intermediaries between God and man differentiates Islam from all other creeds. In the Islamic faith, every man is his own priest and pleads for himself forgiveness and mercy. No sacrifice, no ceremonial invented by vested interests is needed to bring the anxious heart nearer to its comforter. It is essentially a democratic creed, and recognizes no distinction of race or colour among its followers. High or low, rich or

1. Madras District Gazetteers Malabar page 192—194.

poor, white or yellow or black, are on the same level in the sight of their Lord. The democratic character of its appeal, and its repudiation of caste explain the powerful fascination it exercises over diverse races. Every Mappilla family has a *Nittu Mappilla* or chaplain, who attends the house daily to read one of the 30 sections into which the Koran is divided, so that the whole can be read each month, and he also officiates at the family *Maulads*, and reads the Koran over the dead in the yard.

Though magic is condemned by the Koran, the Mappilla is very superstitious, and witchcraft is not by any means unknown. Many *Tangals* pretend to cure diseases with the aid of charms and amulets. Of these charms the most potent is a copy of the Koran. They also dispense scrolls for elusus, and small flags inscribed with sacred verses, which are set up to avert pestilence or misfortune. The Mappilla *Jins* and *Shaitans* correspond to the Hindu demons, and are propitiated in much the same way. One of their methods of witchcraft is to make a wooden figure of the enemy, drive nails into all the vital parts, and throw it into sea after the recitation of curses in due form. A belief in love philters and talismans, and precautions against the evil eye, are very common.

When a Mappilla dies, the pillow on which his head rested is removed, and his old dress is replaced, while the body is gently shifted to such a position as to make the legs stretch towards the *Kebila* in order to bring the face towards it. Then the two big toes of the leg are tied together by a piece of cloth, and the hands are placed on the chest, the right over the left, and the jaws are also bound with a piece of cloth. After keeping it in this position till the cries and mournings have subsided, and distant visitors have had an opportunity of seeing the dead body, it is removed to the bathing room and is washed in hot water. The corpse is then taken back into the house and laid on the floor on mats covered with clean cloth, on which rose water is sprinkled and grains of camphor strewn. The ears, nostrils, the space between the lips, the fingers, and toes, are stuffed with cotton. Three pieces in the case of males and five pieces in the case of females, of white cloth of about the length of the body are used for binding the feet, and the body



is tightly and gently wrapped in the winding sheets. From the moment of death till the body is removed for burial, Mullahs are employed to read the Koran by the side of the corpse. The body is next placed on a bier specially constructed for the purpose and kept in every mosque. The bier is borne on the shoulders of men to the mosque attached to which is the burial ground. In the graveyard attached to the mosque a grave is prepared, and *Tah Ul* (there is no God but God) and other holy hymns are repeated in a low and solemn tone. The bier is placed near the western wall of the outer room of the mosque, and the assembled mourners arrange themselves behind in parallel lines according to the principle observed in the daily prayer over it. This prayer differs from the daily one, and is said in a standing posture without the bowings and prostrations made in the daily prayers. The bier is then taken to the grave, which is ten feet long, two feet wide, and six feet deep. The body is then pushed in so as to make it lie on the right side, facing towards the Kebla, the position of the grave being from north to south. Then a handful of earth is placed below the right cheek as an emblem of humility. The grave is next covered with cut laterite stones, and each of the assembled individuals throws a handful of earth, reciting a particular passage from the Koran, besides the formula "there is no God but God", which is repeated from the moment the body is borne away till the grave is covered up. Two pieces of stone are fixed, one on either end of the grave, to mark the extremities. The Kazi or some other learned man seats himself at the head, and recites certain passages called 'the teaching', meaning thereby that the spirit of the dead is taught how to answer the questions that are believed to be put to him in the grave by the angels. In the case of rich persons, money and rice are distributed to the poor at the time of burial. A temporary shed is erected over the grave, and a number of *Mullahs* are appointed to read the *Koran* over it for three days a week or forty days, according to the means of the person concerned. The Mullahs read uninterruptedly day and night by turns, and they are also employed to read the Koran in the home of the deceased. This is done for not less than three days. All those who pay visits of condolence to the mourners are expected to do so on one of these three days

when, if circumstances permit, they are sumptuously fed, while the visitors in turn pray for the departed soul. On the third day a grand and costly ceremony takes place. *Maulad* (the history of the birth, etc., of the Prophet) is read, when Mullahs are paid for their services, and alms distributed to the poor. Some spend largely on the ceremonies connected with death, the aggregate cost being between 1,000 and 2,000 rupees. The remuneration paid to each Mullah varies from eight annas to one rupee. On the 15th and the 40th day, death ceremonies are performed, which consist in reading *Maulad* and feeding a large number of people, while the anniversary of the death of a relative is also performed by those who can afford to defray the expenses connected therewith. Predestination is firmly believed in. It is alleged that, as soon as the body is laid in the grave, the two examiners, *Monker* and *Nakir*, enquire into the work of the deceased during his lifetime. The bridge, which, from the earth to heaven, is said to pass over the centre of hell (a burning fiery furnace), is finer than a hair and sharper than a razor, and the good souls are assisted rapidly across by guiding and protecting spirits, while the wicked, who try to follow, fall down into the abyss below. After the consummation of all things, the bridge will be destroyed and communication cut off. The chief punishment is the denial of the sight of God, and there are eight degrees of beatitude according to the proximity of Him, nor is hell considered eternal, but after a certain period of expiation the cleansed souls are said to arrive in paradise.

Mappillas are found in all grades of work. The people on the coast are mostly traders in all goods and get on exceedingly well, being bolder and more speculative than the Hindus of the District, while those in the interior are both traders and agriculturists. A large number of them are engaged in cooly work. In the interior they display the same superior spirit of adventure as agriculturists, traders, and sportsmen; and in these callings also they are successful and prosperous. They also make skull-caps, fine canvas beautifully embroidered by hand. They take an active part in fish-curing, which is best done by the Mappilla women. Many work as coolies in the plantations of Ceylon, Singapur, and Muritius, and other places, earning six to eight annas a day.

In personal appearance they are of a fine athletic build, though by no means so good looking as their fellow countrymen. Those of good and old families have a marked cast of features. Their high foreheads and pointed crowns are noticeable for being kept shaved and, when covered, the heads provided with a gaily embroidered skull-cap. Among the poorer classes of Mappillas, the men merely wear round their loins a piece of cloth (*mundu*) generally white with a purple border, but sometimes orange, green or plain white, and kept in position by a *nool* or waist string, to which are attached some pieces of gold, silver, or baser metals containing texts of the Koran or *Magic yantrams*. Many have a small linen skull-cap on the head. In the interior, men of property dress merely in a waist cloth often coloured and of mixed cotton and silk. On the back of the head, a Madras *rumal* handkerchief is tightly twisted, and an upper cloth generally of fine texture is thrown over the shoulders. A small knife is also worn at the waist. On the coast and in the towns all above the labouring classes wear a short white jacket (*angurika*), reaching half way down the thigh, and the sleeves are generally tight, and reach the elbow, though sometimes they are of the usual length. Beneath this many wear a *hamish* or loose shirt of the usual Mussalman pattern, while in the cold weather many wear a short jacket of cloth or padded silk. On the coast almost all wear a stiff cap four to six inches in diameter and four or five inches high, stuck on to the top of the head, and round this, a *rumal* or turban is often twisted. The cap is made of twisted silk thread, and the best sorts are brought from the Laccadive Islands. Sometimes this singular head dress is made of coloured paste board, and is several inches high. Very often a long jacket (*abbornax*) or moorish cloak, reaching up to the ankles with a small jacket reaching up to the waist-coat over it; light cap of white cloth with a muslin turban and a red or striped handkerchief complete the dress of a man. Coats of European fashion are now finding favour among them, and the use of costly woollen shirts and coats is on the increase among them, so much so that it is a matter of wonder how they, who scarcely a generation ago, were able to wear nothing more than a *Mundu* or cheap cloth, manage to use such costly materials for their dress, when the complaint about the growing poverty of the native inhabitants

still is loudly heard on all sides. Mappillas shave their heads clean, but beards are frequently worn especially by old men and *Tangals*, and *Hajis* or men who have made their pilgrimage to Mecca, and some holy men often dye their beard. Some again wear small moustaches well-trimmed.

The dress of the women is much more modest than that of the Hindu women. The poorer classes wear a cloth of a dark-blue colour reaching from the waist to the ankles, and a loose jacket of thick white cloth with long sleeves, the seams of which are often edged with red, and which reach a few inches below the hips. These and a small cloth thrown over the head and falling over the shoulders form the usual dress.

Among the higher classes, the dress is much the same, the difference being in the materials and colours. The upper cloth is generally so large as effectually to conceal the figure, and is used as a veil. Coral and bead necklaces are worn by the poor females, and ear-rings of coiled silver wire are inserted into the upper part of the ear. People of property, of course, indulge in a variety of female ornaments. In their personal habits the Mappillas of the lower classes are extremely dirty and slovenly. The women do not part their hair, but merely draw it back from the forehead and twist it into a knot at the back of the head.

Both men and women wear a cord round the waist, with two or three talismans of cylindrical shapes made of silver or brass, in which they keep rolls of paper with passages of *Koran* as charms. Often a few gold fanams or other small coins are kept in the same receptacle. Ordinary women appear in public without veils, but among the better class, it is usual to cover the head and body with a long robe. They are very scrupulous about the chastity of their women, who however enjoy very much freedom.

Incredibly large sums of money are spent on female ornaments. For the neck there are five or six sorts, for the waist an equal number. There are, besides, long rows of armlets, bracelets, and bangles and anklets all made of gold. As many as ten to fourteen holes are bored in each ear, one being in the labia and the rest in the ala of the ear. The former is artificially widened and a long string of ornaments of beautiful

manufacture is suspended through it. A strict Sunni of the Shafi school is prohibited from boring the nose.

The principal food of the Mappillas is rice and fish. The consumption of wheat and flesh is however on the increase. They have generally three meals a day, *kanji* at about 10 o' clock in the morning, rice at 4 P. M., and rice *Orakanji* at 8 P. M. *Rotti*, a circular loaf made of rice or wheat flour mixed with water baked on heated iron or stone plate, is taken along with the *kanji*. Ghee is largely used in seasoning and frying the wheat and *rotti*. A liquid curry is prepared with flesh, and is sometimes eaten with the *rotti*. They have no scruples in eating food from the same plate along with others, as many as ten persons eating of the same plate. Crokery of foreign manufacture is in ordinary use. The plates are arranged on a circular mat measuring from two to four feet in diameter and made of date leaves, and the party sit round the mat which is called *sufra*. Various sorts of palatable and nutritious sweets are consumed. In the art of preparing sweets, the Mappilla women of North Malabar surpass their sisters of other castes in the District.

The consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited. There is one unique instance in which religion permits the use of alcohol *i. e.*, drinks. If a person has his gullets blocked by any foreign body, and it is undoubtedly ascertained that a little alcohol will remove the danger, a quantity just enough to remove it may be taken. It is to be remembered that in no other instance is the use of alcohol permitted. There are, however, a few individuals who irregularly transgress the divine commandment on this point as in others.

The Mappillas as a class are illiterate. The only education received is a parrot-like recitation of portions of the Koran, which, being in Arabic, none of them can understand. The scruples of the parents prevent them from permitting their children to attend the vernacular school of the Hindus or even of the Government primary-schools. They are indifferent to the education of their children even when special schools for them are started with religious instruction by their own teachers. The members of their own community who have advanced so far as to be able to read and write are not very many. Of their religion itself, the Mappillas possess only such knowledge as they can get

from Malayalam tracts, for which there is a considerable demand, especially for those detailing essential things to be attended to in pilgrimages to Mecca. The ceremonial observances connected with bathing, the washing of the hands and face, worship by prostration, the appropriate prayers, the hours of worship the Prophet's commandments, acts vitiating efficacy of worship, the giving of alms, the observance of Ramzan and many other similar subjects are treated of in these tracts. Thus the people obtain from them accurate ideas of the out-ward forms of their religion in the observances of which they are very strict.

The Jonakan Mappillas are generally fanatical Muhammedans who are very fond of songs, mostly religious about their Prophet's battles and also of their ancestors. These songs are intended to stir up fanatical fervour, and in quantity they form nine-tenth of their literature. The following are the translations of some of them by F. W. Fawcett Esq. quoted from the Indian Antiquary vol. XXVII.

*Mappilla-songs*.—"In the name of God I begin the song. I pray to Muhammed the Prophet who is the cause of all created things. I pray also to his relatives and to the Ashabi army. I pray to all Mussalmans".

"The poet goes on to say that *"Abu Bekir Siddik was the first true Shahid*. Even the angels of God hold him in high respect. He was a true man and he never exposed his person to any one until his death. May God always bless him."

"*Omar Bin Katab is the next*.—He held the faith dearer than all his wealth and all his children. The dust in his hand was transformed into musk by the most high and the odour of that musk always pervaded his body."

"*Usman Bin Alvan is the third great Shahid*.—He had the Prophet's permission to admit any one he pleased to heaven. He visits every place like the lightning of Heaven. He is the most celebrated man in Heaven or earth; and he married two of the Prophet's daughters."

"*Isman Ali is the fourth*.—He is described a tiger in Baitul Issa. The angels of death fear him. He was the son of Abdulla's brother the most beloved of the Prophet and the husband of Fatima the Prophet's daughter, dearer to him than eye-sight". A tremendous fighter! "His name is written *"Tiger"* on the cot in these—"He is the gate of the Hall of Wisdom. May God always bless him."

The story of the Perumal, the last king among knights of Malabar, and his voyage to Arabia where he met the Prophet are there told. Then we come to the *destruction of the Malapuram mosque*, where 44 Mappillas, the bravest of the brave, fought to death, parents, wives and children, tried to dissuade them, but to no purpose. The wives were told they would by their husbands' death in glory obtain salvation. But what about the present? Do you not see the sky sustain without a pillar . . . . . frog in the deep recess of the rock, the chicken in the egg, and the child nourished in the womb? Is it reasonable that you will be helpless? Does a man in the grave think of his parents? When we are weighed in the balance who but God will help us? Can one's parents? If men permit sacrilege to their mosque all pains of hell await them. It is only by dying for the glory of God they can obtain heavenly bliss, and then they can bless and aid their families.

"Ho! Ye Brethren! The shahids are most mighty ghosts and Bhûtas fear them. The wicked Eblis is their enemy. Those who sing their praise obtain salvation from God. Those who slight them will suffer untold misery." "Nothing is more pleasing to God than sacrificing one's body and soul in defence of God and none more honoured than these Shahids." "They did not become Shâhids under compulsion but of their own faith and conviction; therefore God gave them a special place in Heaven and a crown in Tajil-Okar. Their bodies are always fragrant. God takes special care of them".

## II.

*The song of Alungal Kaudir.*—Another of the songs was written by the popular Mappilla poet *Alungal Kaudi Moyan-kutty Vaidiar*, grandson of a convert from Hinduism, of the stock of the old Velan or Vaidiar, a hereditary Hindu physician. The poem begins with extolling Muhamed and tells how the king of Damascus was convinced of the truth of his mission when the Prophet made the moon rise at the wrong time ascend the zenith, divide, and each half pass through the sleeves of his coat. Then follows a version of the tale of Joseph, and Potiphar's wife and how innocent minister ascended to Heaven telling the king who suspected him that he would be pardoned if he accepted "the New Veda" which a Prophet was then bringing to men from over the sea.

Regardless of chronology, the poet tells how Islam was brought to Kerala and how eventually a grand mosque was built at Malapuram. Mappillas will not allow even an atom of the *Cadjan* roof of the mosque to be burned. They will fight to death for it, and they are glad of the opportunity. The poem continues:—"The soul in our body is in the hands of God". Can we live for ever in this world? Must we not die once? Everything will die, but God alone will not. Such being the commandment of God, we will have no excuse when we are brought before them after death; so determine earnestly to fight and die. If we die fighting with the wicked men who attempt forcibly to burn the holy mosque which is the house of God, we shall obtain complete salvation. The occasion to fight and die for the faith is like unto embarking in a vessel which has come to bear the believer to the shores of bliss. Therefore embark! How well for you that such a vessel has come! It will bear you to the broad gates of Heaven. Is it not for the arrival of such a vessel that we should pray"? ... ..

"The pleasures of wealth, or family, are not equal to an atom of celestial happiness. Our most venerable Prophet has said that those who die in battle can see the *houris* who will come to witness the fight. There is nothing in this world to compare with the beauty of the *houris*. The splendour of the Sun, of the Moon, and of the lightning is darkness compared with the beauty of their hair which hangs over their shoulders; their cheeks, eyes, faces, eye-brows, foreheads, heads, are comparatively lovely. Their lips are like corals, their teeth like the seeds of the *Thalimathalam*; their breasts like the cups of gold, the pomegranate or like beautiful flowers. It is not possible for the mind to conceive the loveliness of their breasts and shoulders. If they wash in the sea, the salt becomes like honey, and as fragrant as *attar*. If they were to come down to earth and smile, the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars would be eclipsed. Mortals would die if they but heard the music of their voice. When they wear red-silk garments bordered with green lace of 70 folds, their skin, bones, and muscles can be seen through them. Such is the splendour of their body. If they clap their hands the clang of their jewels will be heard at a distance of 500 years' journey. They clap their hands, and dance and sing as they come like swans to the battle-field. If



a human being were to see their beauty, their smile or dance, he would die (with longing) on the spot. Gently they touch the wounds of those who die in battle, they rub away their blood and cure the pain, they kiss and embrace the martyrs, give them drink of the sweet water of heaven and gratify their every wish. A horse caparisoned with carpets set with precious stones will be brought, and a voice will say "Let my men mount; let them dance with celestial *houris*". Then the celestial coverings will be placed on their heads; they mount the beautiful horses which will dance and leap and take them away to heaven where they will live in unbounded joy".

..... "Such is the fate which awaits those who die fighting bravely. At the dissolution of the world they will be sped like lightning over the bridge across hell. In Heaven they will attend the marriage of Muhammad. They will be decorated with bunches of pearls and crowns of gold; they will be set on the tusk of Muhammad's elephant, and enjoy supreme happiness. It is impossible to describe the pleasures which await those who die fighting bravely without flinching. All their sins will be forgiven, and God will listen to all their prayers".

"Far otherwise is it with the coward. All his virtuous actions will be ignored. He incurs the wrath of God. He will be written down a renegade in the book of God. His prayers are vain. He will die a sinner and be thrown into hell where fresh kinds of torture will be given to him. In hell are countless myriads of scorpions, snakes, and frightful dragons. "It is a pit of everlasting fire". The pleasures of Heaven and the pains of Hell have been revealed to Muhammad "who in his turn taught his disciples. It is the learned Musaliars who now hold the knowledge."

Let it not be supposed that the above feelings are entirely sensual and erotic. On the contrary, the "Mappilla" version of Islam has had a strong effect for good on his life and morality.

### III.

"*The Battle of Bedr* :—Another song by the same poet is of Muhammad's famous battle of *Bedr*, where he routed the Koriesh also a subject of endless interest to Mappillas. *They say that as the battle was fought in the 17th Ramzan in the*

second year of the Hijra, it is a good day on which to die fighting. Curiously enough, the month of fasting, during which it is enjoined not to fight unless forced to do so, is the very one in which the Mappilla the *ultra* strict follower of the Prophet according to his lights, chooses to go out to fight and die. The twelfth day of Ramzan is with them a good day on which to start out under devotion to death and it was selected in a last rising. The poet describes how the angel Gabriel told the prophet that bliss awaited those of his followers who died fighting with the infidels. The prophet then tells them how they could gain paradise and be met by the *houris*, whose eyes are like the waxing moon, whose cheeks are like the plantain leaves, who are soft as the petals of the young shoe flower, "by way of inspiring them with courage. The imagery is not quite so happy as before, for the necks of the *houris* when they walk wave to and fro is like the neck of a rutting elephant. But their breast is like a lake wherein are lotus flowers, and they are always 16 years old and very amorous". . . . . "They come like sporting elephants to bear away those who die in battle and strive with each other saying "I will take him, I will take him". The prophet swore to his army that such happiness would be theirs if they died fighting bravely". Omar was eating dates, when he heard this he cast them away. The prophet asked why? He replied that he wished to waste no time in eating dates. "I wish to use my time for fighting," and so saying, he rushed like a lion among a flock of sheep, killed many and died fighting; he met the death he wished for". The father fought against the son, for, the bond of the faith is stronger than the bond of blood. The angels of death fought on the side of the prophet and the Korish were defeated."

The Mappillas of Cochin are mostly poor and ignorant, but unlike their brethren in South Malabar, they are on the whole peace-loving and law-abiding. In religion they are very orthodox, and their piety and zeal sometimes border on fanaticism. They do not take advantage of the educational facilities afforded to them by the Darbar, and do not make any serious attempt to raise themselves socially, morally and intellectually. Their marriage prohibitions, like those of the Jews are very few, and all matrimonial alliances are formed in accordance with the precepts

Conclusion.

of the Koran. Polygamy prevails among them to a larger extent than any other community in the State. Physically, they are, on the whole, a fine class of people, and are fit for any hard and enduring labour. They are much attached to those who treat them with kindness and consideration, and are by far the most serviceable and most reliable in emergencies.

END OF VOLUME II.

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